THE LAZY
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The Lazy King

Volume 1

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Epub: Henkanepubs

Table of Contents

The Lazy King
Chapter 1: Acedia’s Sloth
Chapter 2: Avaritia’s Greed
Chapter 3: Luxuria’s Lust
Chapter 4: Ira’s Wrath
Chapter 5: Gula’s Gluttony
Chapter 6: Invidia’s Envy
Chapter 7: Superbia’s Pride
Chapter 8: Melancholia’s Depression

Chapter 1: Acedia's Sloth

Part 1: Ah, this is a Pain

Ah, this is a pain.

I apologize for the sudden question, but do you know about the concept of otherworldly reincarnation?
I had never heard of it until I reincarnated, and I don't think its usage was that common in my former world, but its meaning is just as it sounds: being reincarnated into another world. In most cases, the person affected usually retains the knowledge of their past life, and gets some sort of special power or something.

I don't really get it, but you start a new game with new strength.
And it's not like I was strong in my former life or anything. Ah. Ha. Ha.

For example, on a planet called earth, in a country called Japan, in a place called Tokyo, I was born. Well, I doubt you're really interested, so I'll skip that part. Anyways, this world has a few people like that distributed here and there, and quite a few of them hold some important offices.

Like Hero, or adventurer, or saint, or inventor, or noble, or stuff like that. Apparently those people often follow that pattern.
I wonder how they manage to do such pain-in-the-ass jobs. They're just like normal rocks on the side of the road, and I really don't care, but I can't help but be impressed by their motivation.

If you ask me why I'm saying these things…

…

… What? Why am I wasting energy moving my mouth to say these pointless things?

"… The Great Demon King has given you a direct order. Please go and write a proper report!"

Loud.
Unable to escape the annoying voice by my ear, I stuck my elbow into the bed, and turned over.

The one nagging into my ear was a woman whose clothing was all made with black as the base color.
Her disposition was as cold as a doll's. There's no doubt that she's quite a beauty.
How useless.

I stick my elbow into my pillow to prop myself up, and looked at the woman who was knitting her eyebrows at me—the Great Demon King, King of Destruction, 『Kanon』's something something knight brigade's member, I think.

"And… what was that again?"

"A report! I'm the one who should be angry here, right!? Even though we were dispatched at the same time to all the demon lords, why is it that I'm the only one who can't go back yet…"

"Ah, you sure have it rough…"

"Please quit screwing around! Write. Your. Damn. Report!"

I don't get what's she's trying to say.
Why do I have to do something like that?
Ah, my arm's tired. I once again fell into my pillow. I've wasted some energy on a useless thing.

She violently shakes my shoulders. Her shrieking voice is just way too annoying.
I raise only me head, and look at the woman who's supposed to be from the Great Demon Lord.
For Christ's sake, if you have the time to be doing this, go do your job. Your job.

"Oy, you. Go write the report."

"Wha… what!? W-why do I have… in the first place, what should I write…"

"I'll leave it to you. I'm busy."

I grabbed the cover, but the woman grabbed my arm as I wriggled into it.
Dammit this is a pain. After I've said this much, she still plans on annoying me?
I'm tired. I'm sleepy. I really don't care.
And wait, what sort of report is she on about?

"In the first place, weren't you the one to say it, Demon Lord!? That writing was a pain so you would talk and I would write it all!?"

"… Talking has gotten tiring, so just write whatever you want."

I tossed over the square box that had fallen off of the mattress.
It's my official seal. It seems that I have to stamp it on reports. It's a pain to get up to find it, so, I always keep it under the covers.
Regardless of whether she writes what I speak, or reports whatever she wants, I can see that the contents will be fiction, so there's no point.

The woman frantically moves her arm to catch it, before staring at me with a blank expression.

"… Then, later."

"What!? Wai…. Again, this is… get up!"

This time, I just ignore her screaming voice, and pull the covers over my head.
In a few seconds, my conscious drifts away, and the annoying voice is merely a sound in the distance. My mind escaped my body.

Um, I think there was something I was supposed to say. What was it again?

Ah… my name.

My name is… Leigie Slaughterdolls. I forgot whatever name I had in Japan long ago.
Once upon a time, on Earth's Japan, I was a Salary Man who dedicated his hours to a company, and now, I'm just a poor, ordinary Demon Lord in service to some Great Demon King.

Part 2: I’m a Pacifist

Let me be a little honest here. When I first noticed that I had reincarnated into this world, my first thought was that it was a pain. That was all.
 But right now, I think that rather than being a Salary Man on Earth, my current life is much easier.

This must be because I’ve been a good boy. Yep. That must be it.
 If that wasn’t the case, then I would have been forced to work for the next few decades. Just like the laborers that exist all over the place. Well, perhaps I would find it a pain, and kill myself along the way.

In comparison, this otherworldy life is exceedingly easy.
 Giving the specifics is a pain, so I’ll skip them, but from the moment I was born into this world, I haven’t worked for a second of my life. Even so, I’ve managed to attain quite a comfortable lifestyle.
 It’s laziness without end. There’s no greater pleasure than this. At the very least, for someone who respects the poor, I’m satisfied with this life.

“Unemployed!? No work experience!? How could it be that one of the Great Demon King’s arms and legs, a Demon Lord is lazing around!? You just don’t want to work, right!”

Right now, the only headache I have is this woman the Great Demon King sent.
 I don’t know her name. She’s quite a beauty. And she screams at me. If you’re looking for her characteristics, I guess that’s about it. She’s just a bit higher than the rest of the mob.
 For me, her screaming is quite an annoyance. For someone as calm as me, we really don’t fit together.
 I’ll bet the Great Demon King tried to send over whoever would annoy me the most as a form of harassment.

“… And what was this about again?”

When you compare the rest of the reincarnated in this world to me, who was born as a dirt-cheap devil, I guess the only saving grace is that this world was exceedingly easy to live in.
 The value of life is just a tad bit low, but if you try a bit, you can enjoy an idle life. Even if you don’t try, it’s possible.
 I feel like an idiot for working my ass off in Japan. I can only say this in hindsight, but I wish I reincarnated earlier.

“It’s a Hero. A Hero! A Hero’s attacking! See, now it’s finally the time for you to rise! Please get off of the bed already!”

“… I’m a pacifist.”

I can’t understand why she’s so energetic.
 She raises both of her arms above her head, and makes a request to me as she looks over me with cold eyes. Change, change. Please give me a more decent one.
 (TL: A line used in… certain clubs to exchange for another woman)

I'd really like it if she stopped waking me whenever I was peacefully sleeping. She keeps waking me at irregular hours, so I'm always sleep deprived.

It's fine if she has motivation, but I'd like her to think of all the people who don't.
When you're pointlessly brimming with spirit, you end up wasting your time pointlessly doing overtime. Ah, I just remembered a superior that worked in my division. Forgot his name, though.

"Pacifist!? The Demon Lord's a Pacifist!? Have maggots finally made their way to your rotten brain!? This is a direct order! The Great Demon King's direct order!! Do you understand the meaning of that? The Great Demon King has personally dispatched you, and it's supposed to be an honor…"

I understand. Honor.
I just can't defeat this drowsy feeling.

"… Change. Change. Go bring in the lazy attendant I had before."

"Eh? Change?"

"Yes. Change. You loud. I hate."

"Whaaaaaaaaat?"

The woman opened her eyes wide in an exaggerated gesture. It's as if I can see the veins just poping out of her forehead.

The woman in front of me is a demon.
I'm also one, and so's the Great Demon King.
But even if you categorize them under one name, there are various types, and we're divided by attribute.
That means, I forget the number, but it's that… you know, that thing in earth's religion or legend, or manga or something. You've probably heard about it.
Um… right, Wrath, or Decay or stuff like that… that thingy with seven or eight things. It sounds really high and mighty.

"My predecessor retired! He said something about『Sloth』being pitiful to look at! Do you understand what this means!? Looking at you, the Demon Lord, he got tired of his own attribute! Hey!"

"I see."

"I see!? Your impression is, 'I see'!? Two words? Only two words!? Ah, damn it all. The hell's with this man!"

It was a topic I didn't really have interest in.
In the first place, I don't really remember the past guy's face. All that I remember is that it was a lot quieter back then than it is now.

I am a demon. My attribute is『Sloth』.
Depravity and resignation, escape and decay, suspension and stagnation, inertia and dejection. A Demon Lord reigning over that sort of thing.
From under the covers, I take a peek at the Great Demon King's underling.

"And do you think that's enough… to make someone like me move?"

"Ku… This man is…"

I don't mean to brag, but I'm a man who can sleep for as long as I want. This isn't just because I'm a devil. It was like that before I reincarnated too.
In order to live, I reluctantly took up work, but on my off days, I slept the whole time. Because of that, I have no memory of when, where or how I died.
I guess that makes me luckier than all those reincarnators who were hit by a truck or slashed by some slasher.

Well, at this point, I don't really care.

The screaming woman is still trying to issue orders.
Even being a Demon Lord is just like being a feudal lord, so I guess it isn't that easy.

"Go report what I'm about to say to Kanon."

With that one sentence, the woman fell silent.
Despite everything, I guess she's still a professional, and she was personally sent by that Great Demon King. She's supposed to be skilled.
Having said what I wanted, I finally resolve myself to return to the world of dreams once more, and again, the woman tries to pull my cover off.

"Wait… Wait a god damn second!! You haven't said anything yet, why are you sleeping again!?"

"… Take a guess."

If I get serious, there's no way a demon of this level would be able to get in the way of my sleep.
I feel the futon, my arms and my hair being pulled, as I let my mind fall into the abyss. I fell into the depths of that peaceful darkness.

Part 3: It's not like I'm a NEET or Anything

I don't mean to brag, but it's not like the only thing I do is sleep.
When I get hungry, I eat, and when it's time for cleaning, I do get off of the bed.

Right, I just don't work. It's not like I'm a NEET or anything.

"… You really are the worst. That's what society calls a NEET."

"I'm on unearned income." (TL: Google it)

"No, it's not like you're living like this for free or anything, right!?"

No to me, it kinda feels free.
I'm not really worried about it, but if possible, I prefer my bed to be soft. And so, when they come to clean, I do get off of it. For a change of pace, I did think of changing my room every now and then, but I don't want to walk in the hallway, so the idea was rejected. I'm not that desperate for a fluffy bed.

The greatest reason I'm grateful for having been reborn a devil, is that no matter how

much I sleep, I never get a headache.
I take a big stretch after I get off the bed, and lower myself into a sturdy chair made of wood.
It's my favorite. Apparently it has quite a history behind it, and it's quite valuable, but I'm none too knowledgeable. When I lean back and let it swing back and forth, it's as if I'm a baby being rocked to sleep in a cradle. It makes me sleepy.

"Oy, wrap that around me."

"Yes. As you wish, my liege."

The maid who had come to clean has a bright smile on her face as she brings the blanket over.
It's this. This is how you're supposed to be treating the existence called the Demon Lord.
Demon Lord isn't just some random title. I have my own retainers, and some land.
It's all what I was granted by the Great Demon King, but I don't really care. What's essential is that the people I've been granted all take good care of me.

I don't mean to brag, but I can't clean, cook or do laundry. The only thing I can do is sleep.

I say my thanks, as she wraps it around the armchair.
And as I was relaxing like that, the Great Demon Lord's subordinate sent me flying.
She thrust at the chair with an incredible amount of power. My body floats in the air for a while before I crash head-first into the wall.
What power. Every time she hits me, I start to remember my past life as a human, and confirm the fact that this is, indeed, another world.

Is it just my imagination, or is this woman's treatment of me getting worse, and worse?

"Ah… my liege!? A-are you alright!?"

"Yeah."

"Quit screwing around!"

The woman stamps her foot in frustration. With just that action, the floor that's supposed to be protected with a barrier of the highest class begins to creak.
Her expression is like that of a devil. Um, when did she get here again?
The maid lifts me by the armpits, and sets me back on the chair.

She thrusts her finger at the Great Demon King's follower.
As she's my subject, of course, the maid is also a devil. I don't know her attribute. IF I may add, I also don't know her name.
I'm bad at remembering people's names. Most of the time, I just don't have any interest.

"The one who should quit is you, Lize Bloodcross! Even if you're a supervisor sent directly from Kanon-sama, your attitude towards our Demon Lord goes beyond what could be called rude!"

I see. So this woman had a name like Lize.

Now that you mention it, I get the feeling that she introduced herself when she was first stationed here.

"The hell are you saying!? It's because you guys are like this, that that Demon Lord over there never has any intentions of working!"

Even I couldn't stay silent at such a remark.

"No, even if they weren't here, I have no intention of working, you know."

"As expected of Leigie-sama!"

The maid is looking at me with sparkling eyes of admiration. I wonder if she realizes that I don't know her name.
And I wonder just what part of me she's admiring.
Well, all of it doesn't really matter.

With feelings of resignation, I closed my eyes.

"Wait… Don't sleep! Didn't you just get up!?"

"Lize, the Demon Lord is sleeping! Please be quiet!"

"Haaaaa!? Why are all you people so soft on this Demon Lord!? And wait, why is this thing a Demon Lord anyways!? All he does is sleep!"

Ah, she's loud.
Ah, all of this is a pain.

There are plenty of demons, but very few Demon Lords.
The method for determining a Demon Lord is simple.

Class: 『Demon Lord』

The ones who have that are the Demon Lords.

Classes are a concept that didn't exist in my previous world, but to put it simply, it's like your occupation.
By rising in Class, humans are able to access various incomprehensible superpowers… various forms of something called Skills. I don't know the details, and I don't know on what system they work. I don't even know if there's a set system. What's important is that by dabbling in your class, you can get to use some convenient powers, and that's all. Even without any effort.

What's more, reincarnators usually end up with some special classes. Like Hero, or Savior or Sage.
In my case, I was born with 『Demon』 as my class.
After a few years of living a depraved life, it became 『Demon Lord』 before I even noticed it. Having Classes change is apparently something that happens all the time. I get the feeling that there was some criterion on who would advance Classes, but I don't really remember.

Anyways, in the end, I became a Demon Lord without putting in any effort, and I was suddenly able to use some strange powers freely.
In that sense, giving an answer to this woman's question would be easy.

I became a Demon Lord by doing nothing but sleeping. It wasn't by my will.

That's all I can say, and I don't have any answers besides that.
But it'll be a pain, so I won't speak up.

"Demon Lord Leigie of the Slaughter Dolls! As a member of the Great Demon King's personal『Order of Black』, I command you in the name of Great Demon King『Kanon』! Lead your Legion, and head to the Prison of Flames. Bring ruin to the Demon Lord who hath gone against us, Granzer Esther!"

"Don't want to."

Why? For what reason would I have to go to some random place for some guy I don't know?

"Huh? You plan to refuse a direct order under the Great Demon King's name? Do you truly understand the meaning of such an act?"

"…"

I truly did not care, so I was going to answer, 'No Idea', but I felt that would make things complicated, so I stayed silent.
It's a problem of personality. I don't think I'm ever going to come to an understanding with this woman. I hate pointless things, and I hate troublesome things even more. What I love is sleep and spare time, and I care not for anything else.

I call over the maid watching over us, and say a single word.

"Iyo."

"… Understood."

The maid respectfully bows her head.
She made quiet steps as she departed from the room. I finally closed my eyes once more, only to feel my head get smacked again.

It was an amazing display of strength. My favorite chair was smashed to pieces beneath me, and cracks spread across the ground as I crashed into it.

The woman's arms were slender. About as thick as a weakling like mine's.
But this is but a fantasy world, so appearance and power are disproportional.
She pants heavily as she raises her eyes. I take a glance at her, and since my chair had been smashed, I laid on the ground where I was.

I can't go back to the bed yet. It has to air. And climbing up to the top of the bed is a pain.
The woman stared at me with a dumbfound expression as I spread myself on the groud.

"… Wh-what!? Y…you're… t-that bad!? H-how about you try saying something at least?"

She's an exceedingly troublesome woman.
Especially the part where she immediately resorts to violence. Let me add that as

this woman is a direct follower of Kanon, she's much stronger than an average devil. Devils have various ranks, and between a normal Demon and Demon Lord, there are numerous positions. Within that, the position one lower than a Demon Lord… I guess she has as much power as a General. This world is definitely a Fantasy, but because of the separation by rank, and the glass ceiling, I guess there's not really a difference between this world and that one. Well, I guess her skill level is deserving of it, but…
This is a pain.

"I'm against violence."

She grabs me by the cuff of my shirt, and shakes me back and forth.
Therein is the form of a small woman threatening a man much larger than her. But in the end, with something like this, disrupting my sleep is… impossible.

"What? You're going to close your eyes in a situation like this!? Impossible, irrational, what the hell is up with this Demon Lord!!?"

She slaps my face left and right, and gets in a few well-placed body blows.
She uses an uppercut on my chin to get me airborne, and continues with a beautiful combo of kicks. Her flowing movements have been heavily polished, giving me the idea that this woman is quite used to beating up humans.
This one… even after transferring jobs, she isn't showing any mercy.
The shockwaves emanating from each blow rip apart the cover, and feathers fly everywhere in a flashy display.

That Kanon guy's going to be getting an invoice for this… of course, I won't be the one sending it.

But in the end, trying to disrupt my sleep with this much is… impossible.

It's not like I'm strong against pain or anything. I'm not taking any damage.
A difference between here and Japan is that a few things from that world have been systematically placed under something called HP, and as long as that doesn't decrease, my body won't get any wounds, and I won't feel any pain.
Normal kicks and skills would drop my HP, but here, by the judgement of a stat called Vitality… the higher your VIT is, the lower the damage.
This entire world is built off of parameters, and using them, you can make a clear calculative comparison. It's quite a pain.

And despite everything, me being a Demon Lord makes my VIT needlessly high. Every time the woman hits me, my VIT gets in the way, and my body is taking less damage than if I was being beaten up by a baby.
This is making me sleepy.
But she sure is an annoying woman. Just what is her attribute supposed to be?
My curiosity has been peaked ever so slightly.

"Hey, you. What's your…"

And there, I breathed in a deep sigh. I flopped onto the floor, and rolled over as I averted my gaze.

"Don't. Stop. In. The. Middle. Of. Your. Sentence!!!!!"

She really is a noisy woman. I really don't have that much interest in you, you know.

I opened my mouth because I felt like it, but along the way, I realized I didn't care.
The sole of her foot comes down on the defenseless me numerous times. My head is being kicked around like a soccer ball, and finally, she presses her sword against my face.
Don't be bringing out a blade here. Not that I plan on saying anything, but…
A few minutes later, after overexerting herself, all that was left was the Great Demon King's underling who had used all her energy, and me, who hadn't taken any damage.

"Hah… hah… This man… I'd heard about it, but… H-he's hard…"

Of course. As long as my VIT is high, I can sleep without paying heed to my environment.
With my bountiful VIT, high temperature, low temperature, poison, and even paralysis, and all other status ailments, as well as abnormalities don't work against me.
It's not like I was born this way, it's a skill held by those of Demon Lord Class.
But the details are a pain to explain, so I'll omit them.

The woman opened her hand, and stared at her own palm in amazement.

"So this is… the Demon Lord of『Acedia』…"

Watch closely, and bear witness. Now kneel before my power.
And if I may beseech you, please quiet down. I assure you that's the only path that will make everyone happy.

Part 4: Sloth and Depravity

Even if I didn't really wish for my status, as long as I'm a Lord, I have my own men… my own retainers.
I'm the natural enemy of humanity, and in some country or another, some something something god's followers see me as their complete nemesis. I should add that a few other demons and Demon Lords are after me for selfish reasons as well.
To summarize, I have lots of enemies. Even though I haven't done anything, I have lots of enemies. It's all the ripple effect from that Top Kanon guy declaring world domination or heavenly domination or hell domination or some needlessly grandiose goal. If I didn't have any men, then as I don't like fighting, I would probably be dead.
Every quarter of a year, someone with a Hero or Savior Class tries an assault, and once or twice a year, heavenly soldiers come to assassinate me. Once or twice a month, I'm dragged into some war going on in Hell. It's a pain. I myself don't fight, so I'm seen as one of the more moderate Demon Lords. I guess the world is at its end.

The Great Demon King's follower who seems to be named Lize has her arms crossed as she stares at me with an unpleasant expression.

"Demon Lord, Leigie of the Slaughter Dolls. For your achievements at the Prison of Flames in the war against the Demon Lord Granzer Esther, under the name of the Great Demon King Kanon, you have been promoted to the Third Rank among Demon Lords, and have been awarded the mighty Demon Blade Celeste."

"I see."

It's not something that concerns me.
As she reluctantly hands over the sword, I toss it aside without looking at it.
I don't need a sword. But it's not like I want a Shield or anything, and of course, I don't want any medals. I really don't want status either. All I want is quiet time to rest.

"AAAAAAAH, what are you doing to the sword Kanon-sama personally sent you!?"

In hot haste, Lize picks up the sword, and hugs it to her body as if it were a precious artifact as she glares at me.
I don't even know the difference between a Demon Blade and a normal one, and I never even get off the bed, so I have no opportunities to use it. Even a kitchen knife would have been more useful.

Well, I wouldn't be using that either, but…

"… I can't accept this. Why the hell are you getting a promotion! You didn't even do anything!"

"No idea."

That's something you should be asking your master. I'll bet that would be a much better usage of your time.
Just meeting her gaze had become tiresome, so I fell face-up onto the bed.
Lize had splendidly destroyed the other one, so it's brand new. At first, I longed for my old one, but now it doesn't really bother me. All that's necessary for me is simple sleep.

I don't even know the reason for my promotion, and I didn't know my previous ranking in the first place. I have no idea whether Rank Three is even high or not.
All of it doesn't really matter.

But perhaps because she was unsatisfied with my attitude, Lize began stomping her foot. I don't know just how long has passed since she first came here, but my impression of her as a beauty has been shattered with not a trace of it left behind. I guess it's true that you can get tired of beauty. The only thing left is her annoying portion, and I'm also getting used to that one.

"Don't think I don't know! The one leading your army was Deije the Usurper! He led it as he conducted the assault on Granzer's armies!"

"I see."

Who the hell is Deije the usurper?
Well, it doesn't really matter. I'm not that interested.
Lize let out a sigh as she looked at my face. Just as I was getting used to her, I guess she was also getting accustomed to me. It's that power of human adaptation.

"It was a splendid strategy. I guess the rumors that the army of Leigie the Depraved was the strongest were true. They trampled Granzer's forces as if they were children… I can see why Kanon-sama is permitting your current behavior."

"I see."

"… Are you even listening to me?"

"I see."

I turn my body over once more, and grabbed the body pillow that was just about my height. I love to sleep, but I also love to roll around after waking up.
Lize's eyebrows rise as she pulls the pillow away. There was no helping it, so I hugged the cover instead.

"… Anyways, I was only sent to watch over you by the Great Demon King, but let me give you a word of advice. As a Demon Lord, you should present something unto Deije for his distinguished services."

"… That's right… Who was Deije again?"

"Haaaaaah!? Could it be that you don't even remember the members of your own Legion?"

That's the sort of thing Sloth is.
And I don't hold any interest towards the demon known as Deije.
It's a bit troublesome, but… I pointed to the sword Lize was holding so preciously.

"… I'll give him that sword."

"Hah? Are you serious? No matter how distinguished he is, you're going to give the Demon Blade granted to you by the Great Demon King to an ordinary Demon?

"I don't need it. If it was some bedding, then perhaps I would consider it."

A new mattress, or mabe a pillow, or maybe even a replacement for the armchair that was brutally destroyed. Kanon actually has a bit of a generous side to him, so I'll bet he'll prepare something nice.

"Divine goods… treasures of the gods… even if you may be a Demon Lord, do you think a Demon like you could use them?"

(TL: Bedding (寝具) sounds the same as Divine Armaments (神具))

It was the first time I ever saw Lize gaze at me with eyes as if she was looking at a monster.
It was, without a doubt, a misunderstanding, but correcting her would be a pain.

"… That's right."

"I see… so you're not just some ordinary loafer…"

Loafer… This woman says some interesting things.
Well, she can say whatever she wants. I have no interest in her words.

I turn myself over once more. The cover is warm, and heavy. It gives a sense of security.
Having accomplished everything I set out to do, I yawned deeply as I closed my eyes.

"Ah, wait a sec' boss Leigie."

What a loud person. It's always like this. Whenever I try to sleep, everyone gets in my way.
I'm going to sleep either way.

"Oy, Demon Lord. That's Deije."

As I was saying, who the hell is that?
I roll my shoulders, and forcefully lift my heavy eyelids.
In front of me was a single man.
He was a large and muscular man. His beardless face was like a smooth blank mask, and on top of it grew a large pair of curling horns.
But his most prominent feature was his arms, three on each side for a total of six.
And on his head, a similar total of six glimmering eyes. In his disgustingly warped mouth, grew long fangs.

"Who the hell are you?"

"… You're the same as always, Boss Leigie… I'm Deije Breindac. I'm in charge of your Legion's third brigade."

"I see…"

The male demon who proclaimed himself to be Deiji had an aloof tone unbefitting of his appearance.
So this is the Deije Lize was talking about a while back… I see…
Yep. I don't care.

"And do I know you?"

"Of course, boss. You're the one who appointed me to take charge of the third brigade in the first place."

"… I see."

I'm a bit curious as to how many brigades I have, but anyways, it seems he's quite an important person.
My instincts are telling me that the Demon called Deije possessed quite a bit of power.

"The one who ignored that girl Medea's opposition, and appointed me leader of the third brigade was you, boss. But I guess you'll never change."

Who's that girl Medea supposed to be? I looked in Lize's direction, but as she didn't seem to be confused about it, I guess that Medea girl's a well-known one in my army.
Well, not that it matters.
Names, and existences, and powers and everything else. They all don't matter to me. Just do whatever you want.

I rubbed my head into the pillow as I spoke to Deije.

"Iyo"

"Yes, it is an honor that I have answered to the Boss's expectations."

Deije lowers himself. On his actions, Lize tilts her head.

"… What exactly is that『Iyo』supposed to mean?"

『I』will leave it to『yo』u.
『I』am satisfied with『yo』ur work.

(TL: In the original, it's Yoha, but it's a combination of phrases that pretty much mean the same thing)

It's a phrase that says both at the same time. Specifically thanking or ordering people got to be a pain, so it's something I thought up. If you just say it whenever you want, they'll interpret it however they want, so it's quite convenient.
But answering her would be a pain, so I'll just ignore her.

"And what are you here for again?"

"Yes, this may be presumptuous, but I was wondering whether or not the boss was deciding on a reward to bestow onto me. How about it?"'

There's nothing to how about it.
I don't care about that. All that's important for me is to strive for a sleep more comfortable than this one.
I looked down on Deije with cold eyes. Of course, it was a pain, so I didn't voice my opinion.

"I'll award you that sword."

On my words, Deije took a glance at the sword Lize was carrying. His eyes glowed red like a carnivorous beast who had just caught sight of its prey.
He licked his lips before turning his eyes back to me.

"It is an honor too great for me, boss. But there was another item I was hoping for… no, I'm not saying I don't want the sword or anything. As you can see, I have six arms here, so…"

"Deije, you bastard! When you're just a run of the mill Demon, you plan on saying that the sword the Great Demon King sent is not enough for you!?"

I hold up my hand to stop Lize, who had flown into a rage. The body pillow she's holding is making creaking sounds, and it feels like it's about to burst. I'd appreciate it if she were to stop.
It's loud. It's a pain. Can't she close her mouth for a second? I just want to sleep here.

It looks like his attribute is Greed. It's natural for him to want more.
Deije of Greed and me of Sloth will never have a conflict of interest.
I recovered my pillow from Lize, and spread it out below my head. I turn my eyes to the twisting patterns on the ceilings as I answered.

"Ask what you will."

"Yes, so would it be possible for me to have another of the boss's special『Dolls』?"

That was a bit away from my expectations.

If it was something I had on hand, it would be fine, but making a new doll would take a bit of effort.

"… That sounds like a pain."

"I beg of you, it can be the most basic type, so…"

This rotten greed. It seems that he won't go away unless I do something to answer his desires, or unless I kill him.
I wonder whether killing him or making a new doll would take more effort.
It was a while back, but it seems to be true that he has done some distinguished service.
If both options will take the same amount of effort, then I guess I'll give him a doll.

I look over the room, and picked up a candle holder from the closest side table.
The holder had a design resembling a skeleton. This is a pain, so let's go with this.
I tossed it over to Deije as is.

Deije accepted it with a full smile.
He traced its form with all six of his hands.

"Boss, this one doesn't have a soul."

It's 'cuz I didn't give it one.

"Would it be better if it did?"

"… Surely you jest. A doll without a soul is but an item. What I'm requesting for is one of your Slaughter Dolls."

"I see."

I guess I really will have to put in some effort, or he won't leave.
There's no helping it. Let's just get this over with.
I yawned as I pointed my finger at the soul-less skeleton.

I used a skill.

And with that, a presence began to eminate from the doll.
Among my powers as a Demon Lord was a skill to grant life to dolls.
It's a skill I specialize in. That's where I get the Slaughter Dolls part of my title.

"Is that good enough?"

"Yes, I will happily accept it. Could you also grant a name onto it?"

Giving a name is an important ceremony for a Devil. The name is carved onto the body, and it's not an exaggeration that the name gives way to new powers.
But why is it that I have to do something like that?

"… If you get some more achievements, I'll consider it."

"… Ki ki ki, understood. I'll do my best to not croak out there."

He laughs in a creaky voice, before retreating. I guess it's a manner befitting for a Demoning governing over Greed, but I don't really care.

With a grim expression, he took the sword from the hands of Lize, who had simply watched over the exchange like a scarecrow.

"Well then, boss. I'll request another audience once I get some merits."

After a single, deep bow, he left the room.

No, you don't have to come again. I'll give you whatever you want.
You don't even have to ask me. I'll leave it to you.
And so, just leave me alone.

Depravity and Sloth. Those are the only reasons for my existence, and that's all I desire for.

Chapter 2: Avaritia's Greed

Part 1: Pile up all the Glory and Treasure

Well, well. I guess Boss Leigie's the same as always.

I had only talked to him for a few minutes, but he's already tired me out. I took a deep sigh as I departed from the room of the Demon Lord of Acedia.

The same.
That's my only impression of him.

It's already been ten years since I enlisted in this guy's army.
From a Demon's perspective, a measly ten years is nothing, and it's a fact that I've been alive for far more than a thousand.
I'm a demon who reigns over『Avaritia』- Deije Breindac, and I think I'm following quite a nice path as a demon.
I was already used to leading armies before I was appointed to one here, and my usable Mana is in the higher ranks compared to the others. From the moment I was born, I was able to keep on building up my greed, and my Class is advancing at a nice rate. I even have some confidence in regards to battle.
That's why I've managed to thoroughly crush the armies of other lands so easily, and the targets of my desire… treasure and glory, come to me all too easily.
But still…
The amount of times I've had audiences is enough to count on all of my hands, but Boss hasn't remembered my face or name. I'm putting shame to the name of Deije the Usurper.

Ki ki ki, well, I'm dealing with the Demon Lord who governs depravity and sloth, so I guess there's no helping it.

I mean, isn't Boss Leigie the most depraved of all of us? I've been around for a long time, but I've never seen him leave his room once. He must have a natural disposition for this. I guess『Demon Lords』really are a cut above the rest.
Well, I've never seen a Demon Lord like this one before, though.

The Castle of Shadows.

It's the base of one in service to the greatest power of the Demon World, the King of Destruction, Kanon.
The castle of Demon Lord Leigie of the Slaughter Dolls was also the most important point for his armies. Its width far surpasses that of Kanon's Castle, the Palace of Rending Flames.
It wasn't extravagant, but to match Sloth, who he governs over, the entire castle was built sturdy.
In truth, most of the men the Great Demon King dispatch are within the Castle of Shadows. Even the Great Demon Lord's armies don't put the vast land they have to good use.

I open the door of the personal room granted to me. It's quite a large door.
The room I was granted was much larger than the one boss uses. It's 'cuz he has no desires. I wonder how he keeps up as a Demon like that.
Well, that's why the affinities of Greed and Sloth are so good.

When I stepped in, I made sure to firmly lock the door behind me before inspecting the sword I had received.

The Demon Blade Celeste.

Once a possession of the Great Demon King, it is a top class item. It's an item with quite a history behind it. If you ask about its shape, it's an Orthodox Longsword. Its deep crimson double-edged blade looked as if it had manifested in the flames of hell itself, and its hilt is decorated with a dragonic pattern. Its blade and handle, and even the scabbard, are died in a blood-like red.
I don't mean to brag, but I have quite an eye for appraising items. Ki ki ki, it's because it's the target of my desire. Of course I would put some effort into studying it.

And from my observations, it's definitely the real deal.
It's the legendary Demon Blade said to have carved up a dragon in a single swing. I unsheathed it and trace my finger down the deep red metal.
Its true power lies not as a sword, though it works sufficiently as one as well. However, it has more meaning when used as a magic tool.
The magic I can sense emanating from the body of the blade is greater than any other Demon Blade in my possession by monstrous proportions. It isn't something a General Class Demon like me should be holding. It truly is Demon Lord Class. I guess it's because the Great Demon King was trying to get the Boss to accept it. It has to have quite a high rank.

Ah, this is no good. Pride ain't my territory.
I caution myself. When feelings, when desires gets stronger, then one's power as a demon will rise. I still haven't fulfilled my greed. I'm not satisfied yet.

I use one of the Greed Series Skills, Big Pocket, to store the blade in another dimension.
As long as my desire remains unfulfilled, the capacity of that space will continue to grow without end. From the time I came to this army, this is the third time the Boss's given me equipment.
And all of them were things Leigie received from the Great Demon King, so they're all first-class. This isn't the type of item I can find from digging around in the treasury of some defeated foreign lord. Of course it isn't. Things from the Great Demon King's cellar are literally pouring into my hands from all directions.
That's why I'm glad I joined this army. Even if the other Demon Lords don't have the attribute of『Greed』, it would never be this easy. As I thought, I'll work well with our drive-less lazy king. This is my perfect hunting ground.

But today's main dish isn't even the SSS Class Demon Blade. Today's meal is the true, largest reason I joined this Legion.
I took out the Skeleton-shaped doll I received and placed it on the Table.

Leigie of the Slaughter Dolls.

A lazy lord, and a rare one who governed the attribute of Sloth; uncommon among the subordinates of Kanon.
No one in this world has ever witnessed boss fighting on the battlefield. In the first place, the details of the Sloth Series skills aren't really clear, but the only thing widely known about them is their skill to make these dolls of mass destruction. That, and the

dolls themselves.
I've met one of these dolls on the battlefield once before. At that time, our blades mingled, and I was able to confirm it. I don't know the numbers this skill can give life to, but… it would definitely be able to control the demon world.
That's just how strong the Doll is.
That creation was a weapon personally owned by a famous Demon Lord.

Even if I say I have some confidence in my power, I'm nowhere near the realm of Demon lords, and I can see that the doll is the same. This one's only just been born, but… it truly is a cut above the rest.
It may possess a power surpassing the sword sent personally by the Great Demon King.

But it's still a child. If I continue to raise this one, it may become my right hand man.
Ki ki ki, my greed is too deep for it to be satisfied by me alone. Isn't it time for me to get myself another body to aid me?

What was once an ordinary candlestick holder now stood firmly on two legs, as it gazed at me with its hollow eye sockets.
Class:『Slaughter Doll』
It truly feels like it possesses its own will. There are numerous Demon Skills that can bring about life, but they're nothing compared to the work of a Demon Lord.

And for a skill like that, he didn't even say the name. He activated it in the middle of a yawn.
Leigie is quite a frightening one. It's not his personality, but his power. The power he used as the Lazy King to continue climbing up in status without moving a finger. It's scary.
We're only a single level apart in class, but I can't even begin to see the start of his power.

Well, one day… I'll be taking it, though, Boss.

The Skeleton doll bows and pledges its loyalty to me.
Good good. That's just wonderful.
Boss Leigie doesn't have even a speck of interest in me, and that's why he didn't put a single restriction on this weapon.

I lower my gaze to the new toy I had been given and laughed.

"Ki ki ki, it'll be nice working with you, Slaughter."

In the end, I'll get my hands on everything.
Well, let's get along until then.

Part 2: A Hard Talk, ain't it?

When I dropped by the war council room, on time, the members were already all gathered there.

The forces of the King of Acedia, Leigie of the Slaughterdolls… his army is divided into

three large sections.
The one with the most members, and the main force on the battlefield: The first Brigade.
The one with the least members, and the one that's usually stationed to protect Boss's castle: The Second Brigade.
The one with a moderate amount of manpower, that specializes in mobility and offense to conduct raids on the battlefield: the Third Brigade, which I lead.

In this castle, there's also the Great Demon King's dispatched forces under the lead of that Lize Bloodcross, but they won't move in the wars involving boss, so they don't really matter.

Anyways, that's the entirety of the strongest Legion, known across the Demon World. It's quite simple, isn't it? That may be the case. But in the end, isn't simple usually the most effective?
And we're winning quite a bit like this, so I guess it'll stay this way for a while. In essence, battles between Demon armies are just two powers hitting each other upfront and skills knocking each other down.

I feel everyone's gaze as I lower myself into the leftmost armchair. I had my new aide Slaughter stand by my side.
When I received him from the Boss, he was small enough to fit on a bedside table, but by absorbing the miasma of the demon world, it was able to『Grow』. The dark eye sockets of a skeleton roughly two meters in height looked over the room without a word. It truly was a masterpiece.

"Deije, slow."

"Ki ki ki, my bad. Well, I'm not behind schedule, right? Cut me some slack."

The general of the second brigade, Medea Luxeliahart, chastised me with her usual pouty tone.

She's a small, female demon. On her unsociable face lies a pair of blood-red, ruby-like eyes. Her no-nonsense hairstyle with straight cut bangs is fastened with a simple ornament.
She sure is a diligent girl.
But I can't be looking down on her. Even like this, she's a general. If you get deceived by her appearance, you're in for a world of pain. Looks and ability are disproportional for demons.

Well, if we were to fight, I'd be the one winning due to the difference in our natures and my superior equipment.

Continuing on, the one sitting in the center is a man of delicate features. Heard Lauder- looked over everyone as he opened his mouth.
His height is a little lower than mine, and he's a slim, calm-looking man. But he's the supreme commander of this army. He's pretty much Boss Leigie's right hand man.
There are various types of people among Boss's subordinates, but among them, this guy is especially dangerous. That means his power is probably the closest we have to Leigie's.

"Well, well, it seems we're finally all here. Then I guess we'll start."

With Heard's voice as the starting signal, a map is projected onto the table.

It's a map of the demon world with Boss's territory at the center.
Among all of the Demon Lords allied to Demon King Kanon, Boss's was a largest, with a vast expanse that looked to swallow all around it. The Prison of Flames we went and obtained in the last war is included in it.

While it's charmingly vast, that also means it's the territory that shares the largest border with the factions opposed to the Great Demon King. The foremost battle line.
Ki ki ki, that pretty much means we can go out and grab whatever land we want. On the other side, if we're negligent, we'll be the ones losing. They're a few hundred years too young to think they can take anything from Deije the Usurper.
Well, as long as I don't have orders from the Great Demon King, it's not like I'll go out and fight randomly. It's because my life is the most valuable. Kanon of Destruction… I aint's gonna go aggravate a Demon King that governs over Wrath.
Even for me, he's a bit higher on the pecking order than Boss Leigie.

Heard started calmly spreading information.

"The Great Demon King has given out a subjugation order for the Demon Lord of Gluttony, Zebul Glaucus. Our target was once the one with the strongest alliance to our King, but due to revolts from a shortage on food, he has killed both Astell Zaabdeus and Claud Astal, both of whom were Demon Lords allied to our Great Demon King. All while slowly approaching our land."

Two points on the map were circled, and as a line was drawn between them, a, expanse of land began flashing in red. Unsatisfied with its bounds, the line gradually began to encroach on the Boss's territory.
Here, where his castle is, there's still a distance before it hits the Castle of Shadows, but it's still proceeding towards it in a straight path.
Ki ki ki, he's brought in a troublesome topic.

This battle's on a different level than the one I crushed Granzer Esther in.

Our target is… the Demon Lord himself. In Granzer's battle, we only fought his army, and the Lord never stepped onto the battlefield. In the first place, Demon Lords aren't things that are supposed to come out so easily.
But this time is different. According to what I can see, the Demon Lord is personally leading the army.

"So the opponent's a Demon Lord who took out two others… quite a hard talk."

"Yeah. But even if you say he's taken down two, they were both fresh Lords without much power backing them. He's no opponent to our Leigie-sama."

Yes, Supreme Commander Heard knows this, and responds as such.
That's right. It's not like he's wrong or anything.
Boss Leigie's Mana is incomparable to all those run-of-the-mill Demon Lords scattered all over the place. I mean, even though he looks like that, he's the Third Rank, you know? Third Rank means… to put it simply, among all those loyal to Kanon, he's the third strongest.

But the fact that the two killed were Demon Lords means that they were definitely stronger than me, who's a Class below.

The enemy's a strong Demon Lord who took on both of them consecutively.

As expected of the super conceited Heard Lauder. It must be a nice thing to be so brimming with confidence. But isn't he estimating himself a bit too high?

I may be greedy, but that doesn't mean I don't recognize the power of others.

I'm not that knowledgeable about other Demon Lords, but even I know that Zebul of Gluttony is a big name. His moniker is the Devourer. In the Great Demon King's faction, he took Fifth Rank, an atrocious Fiend. And our Demon Lord over here won't lift a finger himself.

If I went one on one against a normal Demon, I doubt I would lose.

I'm even confident I could crush an army.

But when my opponent's a Demon Lord, despite having overcome countless battles, I'd be at a disadvantage, I guess.

I know the answer, but let's ask just in case.

"What did the boss say?"

"Iyo. I'll leave it to you."

Wow.

I whistle aloud. Medea raises her eyebrows and looks at me with accusatory eyes.

As I thought, we've been thrown to the wolves. As expected of Sloth. Even when the Demon Lord comes knocking on our door, he shows no interest.

No interest. He's making this prideful one look like a child. His stance never wavers.

That girl Medea knits her eyebrows as she flips through all the information pertaining to Zebul. She soon raises her eyes.

"… We're at a slight disadvantage. Do we have any other pieces?"

"There's always the option of dragging Leigie-sama into this."

Heard offered a suggestion.

Well, well. I guess boss has it rough too. But since the Fifth Rank is coming, that's always an option. That is, if you don't consider his tendencies.

Medea folds her arms and fidgets with a pouting face. She's in a bad mood. Did something happen?

"We cannot bring trouble to Leigie-sama's hands."

"Exactly. If the opponent is a Demon Lord, we just have to dispatch an appropriate amount of force, is all."

Oy, just what sort of force is appropriate for that?

But the Demon Lord of Sloth… no matter what happens, he won't move.

Just as one of Greed like me refuses to stake his life for some unknown treasure, his longings for rest exist around him like some inorganic immutable object.

But I understand. This is… but another trial on my path to glory.

Even if I'm just leading an army, if we really take down a Demon King, then Leigie's name will rise even further in the world.

At the same time, the rewards for taking out a Demon Lord who killed two others must be greater than the Demon Blade Celeste… There's a possibility that it surpasses

an SSS Class treasure, an L Rank Item. And as always, it'll flow right from the Boss's hands into mine.
The moment I obtain it, perhaps the craving sleeping within me will reach a whole new level. It's possible… that I may even finally become a Demon Lord.
There's more than enough to gain for me to risk my life.

"Hmm. We can't besmirch the name of our Demon Lord… Deije, do you think you can handle it like always?"

Heard calmly sends a strong look in my direction. There is no impatience in his eyes. This guy is seriously considering it. That if I went out, a Demon Lord of this level would easily fall. The reason he directs such stuff at me is because his essence, his pride, extends not only to himself, but to the army under his command.

If it was as per usual, the Third Squad would be launching the first attack.
Ki ki ki, you sure say some hard things calmly, oh supreme commander.
I'm a man who doesn't do the impossible, you know? Though I do like the smell of achievements.

"Ki ki ki, it'll be a bit of a pinch for my squad alone. Not for fighting the army, but Gula Skills are known to specialize in targeting large areas, and the enemy is a powerful Demon Lord."

"I'll go."

The short girl stands up from her seat.

What's this about?
Why is that girl Medea stepping down from her duty to guard the boss?
Will it rain spears tomorrow or something?
(TL: A common phrase meaning something really unlikely is happening)

"… Oy, oy, what's with this turn of events? Medea? Don't you have your own duty to attend to?"

I'd really like our Supreme Commander, who has a good affinity to battle Gula, to step forward here.
What about protecting this castle?
But her eyes were brimming with resolve, and she answered in a level tone.

"Deije, Leigie doesn't require protection from someone of my level."

Oy, didn't we promise never to bring that up?
And that isn't the problem.
A Demon Lord's Skills are a cut above the rest. There's a difference in one's usable skills based on personal skills, but regardless of our merits, I can't even imagine what skills the Rank Three Boss has in his arsenal.
And what she says implies that the boss needs neither me nor Heard here either.
An unrestful atmosphere taints the air of the council room.

But that girl's next line cleared it away.
She made a rare display of emotion as she gazed at me with scorn.

"And recently, I haven't racked up any accomplishments. I need to move my body a

bit, or…”

An unexpected response. That should lie outside of this girl’s domain.

But I see. So it’s like that.
She isn’t acting on logic, I see.
So that’s why that girl’s been so docile as of late.
The reason the girl who ain’t pride or greed wants merits.
I let out a smile as I try asking.

“Hmm. Meaning… it’s built up?”

“…”

Oh my. This won’t do.
Her wide eyes pierce through my body, and an immense pressure envelops the room.
It’s like her gaze itself would be able to kill someone.
Ki ki ki, Medea Luxeliaheart, a demon governing Lust.
What? It’s nothing to be embarrassed about. I can’t go against my desire for material wealth, but the girl’s doing her best to contain her appetite.
… Well, in the first place, a Lust Demon that still has a hold of their sanity is a rare sight.

“Deije, you don’t have to go… no, stay away. I’ll take care of it.”

But I can’t ignore those words.
I’m all smiles as I offer a rebuttal.

“No, no, no, no, offense is my squad’s role, right? I can’t pull back, you know. I’m『Greed』, am I not?”

“Hmm, then the two of you go together.”

Heard speaks with a condescending tone.
It’s as he says. If two of the generals of someone important like Boss’s army faced defeat, we’d lose face. The Demon Lord’s army is something lent out by the Great Demon King. If it were to be lost, we would be stimulating the king’s『Wrath』. We can’t be giving him any reasons to get rid of us.

That girl made a scornful expression at Heard’s words, but perhaps because she knows who we’re dealing with, she doesn’t say another word. She sure is loyal.
The map projected on the round table vanishes.
Even if you call it a war council, Demons are all selfish beings. All that gets decided is who’s going to be dealing with the problem. Everything else is left up to the command of the individual squads.
Before I got up, I ask Heard just in case.

“What about you, Supreme Commander Heard?”

“Oh, there’ll be no chance for me to step out. I’m leaving it all to you and Medea.”

His words were backed by a serious tone. This guy seriously believes that a group of normal demons can take down a Demon Lord.
They’re twisted. Each and every one of them.
Ki ki ki, I guess pride can be quite sinful too. How scary.

Well, all I've got to do is try my hardest so I don't get disposed of is all.

Part 3: Looks like This One's Interest Clashes with Mine

"Yo, Medea–"

"… You picking a fight? It won't come cheap."

We've already been deployed to the base on the frontlines.
Boss's forces are uncharacteristically excellent. Of course the commander, me, is also excellent, but even the quality of our standard devil soldiers is different from the rest. If you ask me, someone with experience fighting in foreign campaigns, it's a matter of motivation. And their firepower is also high.
Ki ki ki, it's all because our top's got no desire. He casually hands out rewards great enough to satisfy even my Greed. From a normal demon's standpoint, the salary is amazing.

On the border between territories, a vast mountainous region, we've been dispatched with numbers around a thousand. It's almost all of the Third Brigade.
Compared to a human army, the numbers may be low, but the quality makes up for it. A single demon's skills is powerful enough to match another human a thousand fold.

Our opponent is that Gluttony, and about three hundred of his followers. Ki ki ki, their numbers may be average, but with a Demon Lord personally leading it, it can't be looked down upon. Zebul's army is that of the Rank 5, and its name's been spread a bit.
If you just compare numbers, we have more than three times their forces. If we clashed with them head on, we may be able to suppress them, so what's important is their side's Lord. Gluttony is a skillset that contains the most offensive abilities with high areas of effect. Just how large of an area can a Demon Lord attack with that? I can't imagine it, but there's no doubt we'll face a large number of casualties.
Just how far we in his grasp? Our victory will be determined by just how well we estimate his skills.

Ki ki ki, well, we aren't going to lose in leadership. I mean, she may be alone, but we have that Medea Luxeliahart, who's always charged with guarding the castle. Ki ki ki, at the very least, her face's good, and she's Lust.
It's possible that she'll look after the survivors after the battle, and that possibility raises morale.
And now, the all-important Medea is wearing a tall white robe without a hint of sex appeal with her usual frown on her face. There's not nearly enough exposure. It's as if she's a nun.

"—Girly, I think you should be wearing something a bit more romantic. It'll directly impact our troops' morale, you know?"

The girl scoffed at the advice that came straight from my heart.

"An unnecessary worry. Deije, I'll say it time and again, but I'm… I hate being looked

at with those eyes more than anything.”

She definitely does say that a lot. But those words really don’t seem to fit with her attribute. Are you sure this isn’t some mistake?

A Demon’s desire is by no means a simple ornament.

Changing class can build new pathways, but it’s not like it’s a straight road. Various paths branch out in all directions, and the final path taken is determined by an individual’s will. Naturally, the path trod down decides the available skills one has.

Call it a Skill Tree or series, or anything, but a general concept exists. In that sense, you can say the Demon Class has 8 different trees. Sloth, Greed, Lust, Wrath, Gluttony, Envy, Pride, and one for basic abilities shared by all, for a total of 8.

The branches on these paths can be equated to guideposts of fate. By venturing from one to another in order, you can find more powerful skills, and on the standard Demon tree, if you store EXP points and use skills, you can naturally venture forwards. But the other trees are just a little different.
The other trees let you peek deeper and deeper into the abyss by fulfilling your desires. It’s all decided by the first skill on all of them… a passive skill『Longing of Original Sin』.
Because of that skill, we can’t increase our usable abilities just by gaining levels.
By fulfilling Greed for the Greed Tree, and Lust for the Lust Tree, we can advance forward.

And in that sense, this girl’s being a bit too stoic.
Ki ki ki, how is she even advancing when she’s like that? For someone without that tree like me, I don’t have the slightest idea.
Well, anyways, I’m an amateur in her field, so I’ll stay out of it. I don’t want to say something to make her go for my life or anything.

“Ki ki ki, well, your path’s your own. At the very least, don’t hold back when fighting.”

“I know that without you telling me. I’ll be the one getting the medals this time.”

“… Oy, oy, I can’t keep quiet on that one. It’s my army here, you know.”

Even if she may be strong, a lone horseman plans to monopolize the battlefield? Even a Greed like me’s surprised. In the first place, her power… isn’t for direct combat, I think.

The Shadow of Illusions, Medea.

Among Demons, of course, the most famous are the Lords, but your name can be spread regardless.
And among Leigie’s army, she’s one of the most reknowned. Ki ki ki, even I knew about her before I joined Boss’s side.
I’ve no idea why a Luxuria Attribute Demon would side with an Acedia though.
Even if she’s not direct combat oriented, she should be able to crush any normal Demon underfoot, but this is no conventional opponent. I can only say it’s a bad matchup to put her against the Devourer.

Medea takes a quick glance at the Slaughter Doll standing behind me.

Even without getting a name, the Slaughter Doll's already far transcended the ranks of an average Demon in battle prowess. If I equipped the rare equipment I hoarded onto him, he'd really be peerless.
I guess it really does depend on the level of the caster.

But without a hint of interest, Medea turns back to me.

"I don't need any equipment. I don't want any treasure either. I don't want to play with dolls, and I don't want status."

"Oy, oy, then what is it that you want?"

"I am Lust. All I want is love."

I see… interesting.
That one sentence makes it clear. At the moment, this one's far more sinful than me, who simply strives for loot and power.
So be it. This one's cravings won't go against mine. I'll just leave it that for now.
For a business partner, probing any further is… unnecessary.

"So you say your cravings won't compete with mine. Well, fine. I'll trust those words. It'll be dull to croak from a shot from behind."

I give a warning.
In a Demon's forces, just by the clashing of wills, an ally can easily become an enemy.
Ki ki ki, what's more, Medea was the one who opposed my appointment to this position 'til the end. You can never be too prepared.

Well, in a straight out battle, she won't be able to beat me with my Demon Lord Class arms.
Try not to die a dog's death as you show off your powers to me. You have something good enough to cut down a Demon Lord, right?

Part 4: Now, Let's Start the Usurping

The Demon Lord who Governed Gluttony, Zebul Glaucus—Zebul the Devourer was of the Greatest of Demon Lords.
Among the Demon World's strongest forces governed by the Great Demon King Kanon Iralaude, he would even rank within the top ten. While this may not have been due to his basic fighting prowess, the ranking bestowed on him by the Great Demon King was Rank Five.
In a superfluous gesture, I ask the men lined up before me.

"Do you understand what that means, men?"

"…"

This may be common sense, but a Demon's appearance doesn't necessarily have to be in human form.
As they gain more and more power, quite a few of them take on human appearance, but a demon's figure is all representative of his individual nature.

A grotesque array of numerous forms were in formation with a sense of order rare to find in the army of a Demon Lord.
It's all because of a skill the guy governing this land, Boss, has. By it, the soldiers of his army will gain power while fighting on his land.

It's a skill common to all Demon Lords, and one of the most famous: 『Abyss Zone』.
That's what makes advantages in a fight between demons not based on size, or geological advantage, but on the quality of the Demon Lord governing them.
Boss Leigie never stands on the Front Lines, but an invisible battle between Demon Lords was already going on around us.
While we can't see the glutton Zebul's zone, it should be eating into the sloth Leigie's zone, in an attempt to give his troops an upper hand.

Ki ki ki, try your hardest.
I'll be doing the same. More or less.

"That means… we are obtaining… the glory of destroying a Demon Lord Himself, what's more, a high class one at that. Ki ki ki, Boss isn't to be underestimated. He's giving us a chance this big…"

If I may, I'd wish he'd be a little easier on us, but that's impossible.
There's no doubt the Boss doesn't even remember the fact that Zebul's attacking.

But that's unrelated to us, the one's fighting at the site.
To satisfy my Greed, I can't be scared to take risks. Otherwise my life would have ended as a nameless demon in the countryside.

I draw a single sword from the scabbard at my waist.

Demon Blade Celeste.

For a swordsman… no, for any Demon, it's a well-known blade of legend.
I concentrate my gaze on the burning body of the sword.
Dark Crimson magical energy as bright as the sun surrounds its wielder, me, as it rises as a pillar of light into the demon world's red sky. Its power is greater beyond my comprehension.

Ki ki ki, as long as I have this, I'll be a match for a hundred.
Additionally, while they may fall short of Celeste, I have a number of Demon Blades just a rank or two below it in my possession.

"Let's go, ya bastards. All the money, the fame, the power and the women are yours for the taking. Release your desires, and prove your powers to our Demon Lord, Leigie of the Slaughterdolls, and the Great Demon King above him, Kanon Iralaude. The Demon Lord of Gluttony is nothing, and it is our duty to make him realize that. Realize just who… it is he picked a fight with."

The strange-looking crowd's applause rings out like thunder.
These guys aren't fools. A strong Demon Lord draws Strong followers to himself. This isn't about the Great Demon King's dispatchments or anything, it's something more to do with fate, or luck drawing them together.
A Demon's base instincts lead them to follow the most atrocious presences to satisfy their spirits.

A nihilistic full moon floated in the blazing red sky.
This territory is still Boss's. In the distant wastelands, I see the black shadows of Gluttony's forces.

Medea slowly gets up.

As if she was shrouded in mist, her outline isn't clear, and it's as if only the powerful pressure she gave off denoted she was truly there.
Me and her rarely work alongside one another. But her single motion showed me the level of her ability.
Lust skills are pretty much an unknown world to me. I'm not saying I've never gone against them, but they're not a group of demons you would often meet at General level.

High class magic that pollutes the mind, and deceives the five senses.
The eyes of the men watching Medea begin turning lewd.
Ki ki ki, what a scary woman. I mean, she's the only woman in this entire army squadron, and she's the leader. If I underestimate her, I feel my soul's going to get sucked out.

"I'm going ahead. Objections?"

"Ki ki ki, do whatever you want, Luxuria. You'r the guest here today."

If you want the first attack, you can have it. All I care for is the result.
First, let's see through the power of the Devourer. That's her field of expertise, right?

Medea's form starts blurring again. It's like my eyes have gone blurry, but they aren't going back. Her formed warped into two identical girls. The second one opened its mouth, and spoke with the same condescending tone.

"Avaritia, I'm thankful."

"… I don't need your thanks. Just do your best not to get killed by the first strike."

"Hmph…"

She scoffed at my words.
At the same moment, in no time at all, her form multiplied from two to a countless amount.

This is… the Lust skill tree. The proof of a demon governing temptation and delusions.
How unexpected. An illusion good enough to deceive my eyes… and she can deploy this amount in an instant?
Oy oy, isn't she a monster? And resistance skills I have against mental corruption aren't resisting anything.

While my mind's in disarray, I do my best not to show it on my face.

Compared to her, the skills of the other Lust demons I fought look like Child's play.
There's a ranking among skills. If you don't learn the previous skill, you can't learn the next one. So just to what extent has she fulfilled her own lust to be able to use illusions of this level?

Medea licks her lips in a seductive fashion. As if painted by her tongue, her lips turn

the crimson color of blood. Her movements were enough to show anyone the attribute she reigned over.

"Then, later."

Her pure white robe turns.
Each and every Medea's robe sways differently as they sprint off.
Not a single sound resounds through the deserted land, and her actions don't change that fact. She somehow remains inconspicuous. Even so, the group moves at a frightening speed.
The real one's fleeting existence wavers like a heat haze in the desert, and it's as if, if I turned my eyes away, I wouldn't be able to find her again. I can't feel her magic or perceive her with any of my other senses.

Impossible. Impossible. Impossible. This is bad. This ability… suitable for her name?
Fitting of her reputation? Don't screw with me. She's exceeded it. If none of my resistances worked against her, then that Gluttony's legion won't sense a thing.

At this rate… she's capable of deceiving and killing them all.
There'd be no room for me to go out.

I'd heard that Luxuria skills become terrifying at high levels, but I never thought I'd confirm it in a place like this. I guess you never know what's gonna happen. I'm glad we're allies.
Well, it's troublesome we're allies too. At this rate, I won't be able to rack up any distinguished service.

"Oy, ya' bastards. Is this the time for you all to be playing around? Follow Medea's lead, and launch a full-on assault! At this rate, that girly's going to take all the limelight!"

Perhaps they had finally noticed I had spoken. The following demons began following her lead, and running off. But their visions are now clouded with the sight of an infinite number of Medeas.
Well, well, well, so everyone's been captured in her illusion. It'll be hell if they have a Lust on them too. Should I equip some resistive gear?
No, in the first place, can a mere magic tool go against this illusion?

As s cloud of dust rises as the army rushes downhill, I go over to the only demon that stayed behind.
An Invidia Demon. Libell Aejens. A small and powerless one, but a scholar whose knowledge is said to be second to none. He's also a friend who accompanied me when I came over to join this army.
In a war between demons, seeing through your opponent's ability is a crucial factor. Based on that, tactics can change drastically.
I ask the wise demon. Not of our enemy, but our ally.

"Oy, that skill. Do you have any recollection of something like it?"

Libell's purple eyes scrutinizingly trace the form of the countless men chasing Medea. Ki ki ki, he may have the form of a brat, but this man once earned recognition for his efforts in the wars with heaven. A renowned intellectual.
Among my associates, he's the one with the most in-depth knowledge of other Demons.

"I've never seen it, but I've heard of something like it… I high class Lust Skill… SS Class『Phantom Aliquot Dance』… A skill to birth illusions with physical substance…"

With a soul-less expression, Libell bit his lower lip as he raised a voice that seemed to come from the deepest depths of Hell.
But his expression doesn't really matter. His answer was outside my realm of speculation.

"… What? Oy, oy, don't joke around. SS Class? That's crossed the bounds of a General Class Demon, hasn't it?"

"… I cannot believe it. No… but, there's no mistaking it. I have a much higher level of Mental Corruption Resistance than you, and I was unable to see through it with these eyes…"

His words were no lie. Due to the nature of the Envy Tree's skillset, Libell's resistances should be far above mine.

Is this for real?
An SS Class Lust Tree Skill? That's definitely within Demon Lord territory.
As a fellow general, the highest level Greed Skill I can use… I've only reached S.
And that candid girl's surpassed me? How the hell?
No, is she hiding her true nature? Stuck in the closet? A Closet pervert? No, no, as if I'd let something so idiotic pass. A Demon's cravings aren't something so half-assed. Just what is that girl doing in the shadows?

No, in the first place, after all that… Why isn't she a Demon Lord yet?

That's wrong. That's not what I should be thinking about now.

A Demon Lord's skills have far transcended the skills of a normal Demon. I don't know just how many skills they have in their repertoires, but if she can use SS Class Lust skills at will, then even a high class Demon Lord will be hard pressed. I mean, the opponent shouldn't have much information on her. High level Lust Demons are hard to come by.

Crap, the Demon Lord of Gluttony may get eaten up at this rate.
I take a sword out of my storage space, and grip it in one of my left hands. I hold up Celeste, and on the edge of the wasteland… I glare a girly, who's coming into contact with the enemy, from afar.
Her pure white coat. Even with such a flashy color, I can't find her.

"Damn, there's no helping it. I'll also go out. Libell, you go and『Envy』Girly's skill."

… But my capacity is already full."

My, my, this man doesn't get it. You don't often get a chance to see a high class Luxuria skill, you know?
『Invidia』Class Skills are picky. If you hold too much desire without fulfillment, it loses its use, and you become just a useless, average Demon.

"Libell, throw away my『Skill Ruler』."

"… I see. That one was convenient."

But he immediately nods. I like how he’s quick to understand.
That’s why I’m friends with this guy.

“Ki ki ki, what’s the problem? Once your skilltree expands, you’ll make more space. Once you get a high class Lust skill, you’ll be able to raise it easier, right? You’ve fulfilled most of the conditions already, right?”

“Yeah, I’ll do that.”

Envy skills let you learn the skills of others. They’re limited time use, and the conditions for acquiring them are harsh, but it’s a perfect imitation.
It’s really convenient. I mean, if you fulfill the conditions, you can even use Demon Lord Class skills.

This is a chance. We can’t approach a Demon Lord so easily. So the acquiring conditions won’t be met.
We’ll use the skill Medea just displayed. It looks to have all-purpose uses. If he learns to use it, I’ll become even stronger.

I’ll get closer to being a Demon Lord. If Deije the Usurper, and Libell the Pursuer join forces, we’ll be the strongest.

Ki ki ki, luck’s finally going my way, it seems.
Now, let’s start the Usurping.

“Girly, I’m sorry. I’ll be taking your skill.”

Power and fame and treasure, and all else. It’ll all come to me.

Chapter 3: Luxuria's Lust

Part 1: A Demon Lord of Lust Said, Once Upon a Time

A Demon Lord of Lust said, once upon a time,

"Even without assertive charm, you can still fulfill your desire.
If it's just satisfying your cravings, there are no obstacles."

Saying that, she didn't eat what was to be eaten, and as she continued wasting away, she gently stroked my head.
Her refreshing appearance and enamoring charisma were enough to make even a female like me harbor certain feelings. She was beautiful enough to force one into depravity, and as I mused at how this was what a true devilish beauty was, I couldn't help but feel envious of her.
Perhaps she was the only『Luxuria』I ever had my eyes on, and I wanted her to view me as a single『Luxuria』as well. She was an exceedingly sweet, dark, and fleeting woman.

That Demon Lord already fell long ago, but her teachings live on within me, and I live with them as my foundations.
Lust is said to be the most difficult to satisfy among the Original Sins.
Demons don't fall to charms so easily.

Material wealth for Greed, Honor for Pride,
Appetite for Gluttony, and Envy and Wrath are on a different Vector.
Sloth has his world complete with him alone, and he won't even remember my name.

And as a High Level Demon, the stronger a Demon gets, the more they must pursue their thirst, and the more they are dyed by those emotions. Once they reach Demon Lord Level, all emotions besides that one are nothing more than cheap scraps of paper lying around. They barely remain.

At present, my greatest enemy is not someone like the Demon Lord of Gluttony, but the Demon Lord of my own forces.
Just how many decades, how many centuries have I sided with him? At the very least, he could remember my name.
Is it my sin for me to think that way?

I hate Deije of Greed. But I recognize his fighting prowess.
That Pride and I never thought to take the initiative and launch assaults ourselves. I may add that Leigie-sama has no such sentiments either, so for Deije, who sought powerful equipment as compensation, he continues to be a useful asset to Leigie-sama's army.

For him, whose longings lead him directly to battle, he's the only one to long to go on the offense in our army.

I'm merely envious of him.
Even I… have things I long for. I've just never pursued them directly.
It's something that can't be helped with the attribute I govern.

I managed to come in contact with the enemy within a few seconds.

Despite this, I'm a High Class Demon. I'm often told that I'm small, or unsociable, or that I lack any sex appeal, but that has nothing to do with battle. With the stride of a High Class Demon, I kicked the ground, and crushed the deserted land underfoot, before coming into contact with the Gluttony Legion that had been several Kilometers away.

More than a hundred of me are visible, but still, the Gluttony army a few hundred meters away shows no signs of having noticed us.

A large majority of the Luxuria Skill Tree has to do with skills that corrupt the mind.

They range from typical charm spells to creating illusions at will, and there are even ones to put others to sleep.

Even so, they aren't favorable for use on Demons.

One of the first skills a demon gets on the basic Skill Tree is a passive that resists mental corruption. Besides Angels and Demons, other races rarely have it, but among those two, it's quite rare to find someone without that skill.

Because of that, Luxuria Demons are looked down upon. The Luxuria Skill Tree, from the elementary to the higher levels, can be completely negated with one of the first skills of the basic tree.

In the worst cases, we're called useless seductresses, and I've completely eradicated those who looked at me with such biased views. They show no interest in me when it matters, but as a joke, they try to tarnish my Pride, and incite my Wrath, even when I govern neither of those fields.

Generally, the Lust Attribute has nothing to do with that. They're making a grave misunderstanding.

It's not that… I'm lacking in sex appeal, and it's not that I'm lacking in charm. My hair, and my skin, and even my clothing, I take good care of it all, and I'm trying my hardest to make my expression as bright and affectionate as possible.

The meagerness of my stature is by no means my fault. It's because I didn't get enough nutrition in my childhood. Once I began paying mind to it, I tried to get as much nourishment into my system as possible, but it was too late.

But I can't go around cursing fate.

It's fine. This isn't my favorite phrase, but none of it really matters.

It's not like I… want to become one who incites sexual desire from everyone, or that I want to embrace everyone.

A majority of Zebul the Devourer's legion consists of Demons with Gluttony as their original sin.

That tree specializes in ways to attack large areas. It's the skill tree whose attack power is second only to Wrath.

But it's useless if it doesn't hit.

The fact that everyone has resistance to Mental Corruption means they have little ways to deal with it once their resistance is overcome.

In particular, the Lust Skill『Phantom Aliquot Dance』is not just some illusionary skill.

Each and every one of my phantoms' fields of visions are sent directly to my head.

At the head of his army, a demon finally captures sight of my flickering image and stops his feet.

The power I sense from his being is by no means low. Zebul's army is quite powerful.

The army of Gluttony was a herd of grotesque demons. There were barely any that had complete hold of a human form. That violent animalistic nature… beastly howls echo through the desert as if to express their appetites.

The magic I sense from each and every one of them is slightly higher than those of the Rank Three army, but there's not much of a difference. These men no longer have a future. They went against the Great Demon King Kanon, and now that they've taken down two Demon Lords, they've burned their bridge back. They won't even be able to make it through with a narrow victory. Unless they completely overwhelm us, they wouldn't be able to stand the confrontations with the fifteen other Demon Lords under Kanon.

From what I've heard, the reason the Devourer started his revolution was a shortage of food. There is little in the nature of food provisions within the Demon World. No, from the standpoint of an average Demon, there's plenty of food going around, but the Gluttony Attribute exponentially increases the required volume. The more they eat, the more power they can obtain. Just as Lust's power increases the more intimate interactions one has. Just as Envy's power increases the more one longs for the possessions of others.

The Demon that noticed us activated a Gluttony Skill.
A black wave of magic expands from him in an instant and swallows me up.

I see… a Gluttony Skill. How atrocious.
The magic around my body is pierced through with fangs and torn away. The magic of the Body Strengthening abilities I was using were forcefully dissipated, converted back to pure magic, and sucked away.

This is… a skill to eat up another's power and use it as your own.
It's likely he didn't know where my real body was, so he tried to target all of us altogether. The scope of his ability has a bad affinity with my Lust skills.
I already knew from the start, but this will be troublesome.

That's why I went out first. I, one of the only three Generals of Leigie-sama's army.
No matter how bad the affinity, no matter how unsuited I am for battle, you cannot overturn the difference in our ability.

My Lust draws his eyes, and they're clouded for a moment. He's underestimating me.
But he only stopped moving for a brief instant, and『Gluttony』dyes his eyes once more. These guys will even eat those of the same race. No, I don't mean sexually, I mean it physically. That's why I hate them. No, it's not like I wanted to be eaten sexually or anything…

The claws extending from his fingers mercilessly come towards my face. Before any of my blood could scatter, I used my hand to gouge his throat out. First one down. Without looking back to see him hit the ground, I continued to kick at the ground.

If possible, I want to use my skills, but as long as they're blocked by resistances, I only have hand to hand combat. But that's more than enough.

Fangs sent forth from behind pierce through my stomach, and like that, a single one of my illusions was eaten up. The blood dancing through the empty air soon vanished.

One of my fields of vision disappeared. But something like that won't inflict any damage on me. My direct attacks work, even on Gluttony Demons. It's been my first physical battle in a while, but it looks alright. I can do this.

Deije is an annoying man, but he definitely has an eye for war. He has some vulgar parts, but I can't underestimate the power that got him a commanding position in a mere 10 years.

The role given to the one who can control the five senses definitely isn't annihilating their army.

My role is to ascertain the power of the Demon Lord. Even if no one said it, I can understand that much.
Zebul the Devourer. I'll have to use my body to take on one of the high class Demon Lord Skills we've heard about and see its power. And that job is perfect for an illusion user like me. Even Deije's Third Brigade that specializes in offense and mobility would instantly get their numbers reduced if they went up against him unprepared.
Even if you categorize him as a Lord, he should have some disparity. Attack strength, durability, dexterity, character flaws, specialized abilities. I don't doubt that Zebul's powerful, but there's a need for me to determine his tendencies with my flesh.
The army's casualties are Leigie-sama's casualties. They must be avoided.

At that moment, Zebul's entire army came to a halt.
My body shook. It felt as if my entire body had been pierced and eaten away.

In the center stood a shadow the size of a large hill. That's the source of these shivers.
A presence that sips away at the body and mind and crumbles one's pride.
I have a premonition of everything and anything scattering and being washed away.

It's a feeling I've never felt before in all my years of service.
That shock made my hands stop for a moment.

This cannot be… this is…

The moment my mind had stopped working, my illusions dispersed.
But what I should be paying mind to isn't that.
Fights between Demon Lords are struggles for territory.
Right now, the outcome of the competing forces was decided.

"Leigie-sama's territory was eaten up…!?"

"… Oy, oy, where are you popping out from, girly…"

Deije let out an amazed voice as I materialized before him.
It's fine. This area separated by a few Kilometers hasn't been affected yet.
My other bodies were all destroyed and absorbed with not a trace left behind. When I turned to run, tentacle like things entangled my feet, so I flung myself into the air. At that point, black, bun-like spheres followed and released countless tentacles at me. That was the last sight I picked up from my other bodies. Without any means of resistance, the illusions went out like a light the moment they came into contact with that black shadow of mass.

What strength. I didn't even have the leisure to deceive him.

My General Class strength won't get through to that.

Truly a Demon that's transcended demonity. A monster that's reached the pinnacle of Original Sin… this is a High Level Demon Lord

I thought I had known, but it's… way too much. I can't even tell what skill he used. No, even if I knew, I doubt I would be able to dodge.

Our base stats are just too far apart. Our levels of longings too far detached.

One of my doubles had tried to lodge her fist into Zebul's back. When I thought she had pierced him, the double was merely swallowed into his body whole. She tried to resist, but she was instantly digested, and my awareness of her was cut.

Even if I was trying to assess the situation, even if it was just a double, I never thought a Demon Lord would be able to kill a General so easily.

His pure violent nature let him mow down all my Illusions of Lust without paying them any mind.

He may be a newcomer, but he's swallowed two other Demon Lords. This is the result.

"Deije, bad… He's strong…"

"… Well, well, well, isn't that obvious? The opponent is… a High Ranking Demon Lord. He came with full intentions to kill boss Leigie…"

Deige skillfully manipulated his six arms as he let out a sigh.

What an irritating man. But that's exactly right.

However, Zebul's power… is abnormal. It's been many hundreds of years since I first breathed life, but he's surpassed all I've ever seen before.

I can't see any means of victory. That's my impression after having crossed blades with him.

Should we retreat some and reorganize our forces?

"Should we reorganize our preparations?"

"No, no, at this rate, my army'll be annihilated. We have no choice but to fight."

Deije smiled as he raised the Demon Blade in his right arm overhead.

Demon Blade Celeste. A sword imbued with flames, named after the legendary fire dragon it struck down.

A gift from the Great Demon King to a Demon Lord, one of the best of swords, was being shown off gaudily.

Part 2: We Cannot Lose

A red hot light fills the world.

Demon Blade Celeste.

It's a sword that contains the attribute of fire.

Its ranking as a weapon is SSS. Besides dragons, it's a blade that's said to have also burned higher level Angels to death.

After having been enshrined in the Great Demon King's warehouse for many years,

that weapon is now showing off its power once more.

By no means can High Level Demon Blades be used as nothing but swords.

"Ki ki ki, as expected, this is some amazing magic…"

Laughing in his annoying voice, Deije unsealed the sword's power.
Usually, this level of weapon would be in the hands of a Demon Lord. It should be too much to handle for a General, but Deije seems to be able to direct that ridiculously large amount of magical power at the enemy forces without much problem.
I guess his large build isn't just for show.

What an annoying man…

The flaming dragon that emerged from the sword swiftly passes over the Third Brigade, before taking a taste of the enemy army a few kilometers away.
A black light emits from their forces.

『Surge of Starvation』

A Gluttonous skill of Gluttony.
The wave of power clashes with the Demon Blade's flames.

The ravenous magic that seems to want to devour anything and everything competes with the inferno so powerful I cannot even begin to comprehend it.
While borrowing that sword's power, Deije truly is able to rival that Zebul's strength.
He licks his thick lips in an irritating manner.

"When borrowing from Celeste, we're just about equal… as expected from a Demon Lord… that power, I want it."

The root of Original Sin is said to be desire.
I want money. I want items. I want to eat good food. I want sex. I don't want to work. I despise others. I want to make them all kneel.
And both mine and Deije's desire can be summed up as jealousy towards others.
In the end, stealing is, in itself, a demon's base nature. Collecting more of something than everyone else in a land with limited resources.

Deije grasps onto the sword emitting light with four of his hands. His expression towards the violent power he was letting forth remained a heroic smile.
The heat is tanning his arms red, but there's no sign of him lessening his grip at all.

"Ki ki ki, we really only have long range attacks, I guess. If I get closer, I feel I'll get eaten up. I'm a bit ill-suited with Gluttony as my opponent…"

"… But we cannot lose."

"Naturally. If we lost with two Generals dispatched here… that Heard will give us hell before the Boss even hears about it."

I touch the sword in his grasp.
It's a heat great enough to scorch both the body and the soul.
By a skill, Friendly Fire, damage from allied troops is cut off, so I'm not hurt. But even without taking any damage, his overbearing might made me feel jealousy.

Deije's right hand Demon, Lebell, is making a grim face.

"Fumu… Gluttony Skill『Surge of Starvation』eats any power thrown at it. Deije, if you don't settle this soon, it'll suck up all of Celeste's magic, you know?"

"I know. Ki ki ki, competition… it's a game. How useless. Celeste's magic power truly is terrifying. But this isn't enough to sate my desire! If we just take down the enemy Demon Lord, then we'll be able to achieve victory with ease!"

At the sight of the conquering flame, our own troops halt their advance. Even if they don't take any damage, they don't have the courage to jump into the fire.
No, right now, the war's become a one on one with the Demon Lord and Celeste. One more step forwards, and it seems evident they'll get devoured but Zebul. Thus is the extent of the thirst emitted by his aura of Gula.
His subordinates are halted as well.

"Ki ki ki, but I'm a bit short on hands. I can't push him back. There's no helping it, I'll use the Doll…"

I turn my eyes to the skeletal doll made of silver-colored bones standing behind him.

"… No need. I'll do it."

Deije seems taken aback as he stares at me. Is it really that strange?
Is it strange for a Luxuria to say such things?

Our affinity is the worst. I'll admit that. But that can't be the end of it all. We have no time to care about something like that.
At this rate, Deije's going to take all the credit.

I close my eyes and extract power from all over my body. I wring out power from my demon heart, my soul core. Fight fire with fire. I desire flames of hell to swallow everything.
Everything, burn the roots of hunger to the ground and eradicate it from the world.

And I manifested my own『Sword』.

"… Oy, oy, what sort of joke is this…"

"… Do I look like I'm joking?"

I raise up the sword in my right hand.
It's a beautiful straight sword with a flaming edge. The blade I made with almost all of the magic in my body at the base falls short of Celeste, but it's still fitting to be held by a Demon Lord.
If Deije isn't enough by himself, then just add some extra.
The Greed Demon's expression warps.

"Is that also… a Lust skill!? Like hell… what did you do!?"

"Witness and behold the power of Luxuria, foolish heathen."

I swung the sword.
Power storms out of it, and a red flash dyes the world.
An enormous amount of heat races up my arm.

Demon Blades require some form of compensation. So Celeste had a feedback like this on the wielder!?
Flames of hell envelop my arm as a similar stream of flame flows forth to mingle with Deije's dragon.

It feels like my body is being torn apart. By flames. My head is spinning.
But Deije, who's supposed to be taking an equivalent amount of pain stands calmly. I cant be the only one showing pain.

Even I'm… a commanding officer. One of the leader of Leigie-sama's army.
My arm was baked by the dazzling light and began to emit an ominous stench. Blisters began to cover my white skin, but those disappear just as fast, being replaced by unsightly burns.
I grit my teeth, and do my best to endure the pain, as I direct my gaze forward.
I continue to direct my flame at Deije's, and the light from it glows brighter. Bright enough that I can't open my eyes.
At that moment, the inferno definitely overwhelmed the Demon Lord's power. Waves of flame came down on the Demon Lord's army.

"… I don't really get it, but you're not bad, girly. Ki ki ki, but I'm…"

Deije let off an evil laugh. His six eyes gleamed with an uncanny sparkle.

"… going to get even more power."

The moment he said that, the intensity of the flames increased explosively.

This is… a Greed Skill!?

The black, surging power that had been pushed back the instant our flames mingled was instantly blown away with the skill Deije used.
Red waves of light swallowed up the army of Gluttony, and spread immensely in every direction.
The swirls of light rain down incessantly on the area several kilos away, but the blast extends all the way here.
It's a fearsome response.

"Ki ki ki, this is Celeste's power… I guess the fact that it was made with the heavenly flames that burned a ruler of demons to death was no lie."

Deije's voice is full of excitement.

What power. It's a dangerous weapon. What's more ,its power that pushed back a Demon Lord was further enhanced with a skill of Greed.

Leigie-sama… this toy is too dangerous to be in Deije's hands.
Waves of intense heat pass over the Demon World desert, and my hair dances wildly behind me.

But Deije's smile soon vanished from his face.

"Oy, oy… is this for real…"

"… This cannot be. There's no way a normal Demon Lord would be able to stand that…"

Libell has a face of shock as he faces the distant wasteland… the distance between us no longer has meaning.

A black mass squirmed. There's no sign of the army that had covered the region.
With heat of that level, they've probably been obliterated without even their souls left behind.

The mass trembled greatly, before it started to contract.
The Third Brigade that had come to a halt only a few hundred meters away from it raise their voices.

The air changes.
It's not just around Zebul. Even the area where I am standing is affected.
The clear pitch-black changes into a swamp-like drudgy darkness.
Noticing that, Deije raised his voice in a daze.

"… Boss Leigie… lost… you say!?"

It was the feeling of him overwriting the『Abyss Field』.
The proof that we had been cast into enemy territory. The power in my body truly has decreased by a noticeable level, and my magic is dropping.

Abyss zone is a skill that is more effective the closer you are to your Demon Lord, as long as you're on their territory.
It should be impossible for a higher ranking Demon Lord to have his Zone taken over by a lower one so easily.

However, up until now, Leigie's zone was one that had never been violated, no matter how vicious the wars were.

"… Give me a break. A Demon Lord that can withstand that baptism by fire!? Isn't that L Class…"

"… Deije, are you able to use that skill from before again?"

"You joking? It didn't even work when we were on Boss's Zone. There's no way it would have any effect on his."

Deije's eyes are in a panic as he looks over his surroundings.
He's correct. Abyss Zone raises the abilities of friendly troops. It's boost is not at an ignorable level.

"Just how much of the zone was eaten!? Libell!"

"… Quite a large portion! The extent is outside the range of my perception!"

A hostility I could sense with my very being.
A viscous and hungry aura.

The only one left is the Demon Lord? There doesn't seem to be anyone else left standing around him, but that's not even any consolation at this point.
The contracting black lump begins to change shape.
From an uncertain slime-like blob to… Human form.

"Zebul Glaucus… One with unsatiable hunger… the one who'll swallow everything, the

Devouring King, is it…”

I can see it.
The Dark Beast that encroaches on the world, decomposing everthing in its path.

The human form it took was much smaller than I expected. It may even be smaller than me. Compared to Deije, who stands over two meters, I estimate he’s around four heads shorter.
Just where did all of that mass go?
As if a hole had been opened in space, the overcoat he wore sucked in all light, leaving only black space.
The oppressive feeling he gave off made the kilometers between us feel like nothing.
It was something I hadn’t felt when approaching him before, that is, until I was right next to him.

“Ki ki ki, how interesting… He’s eating up Boss’s Zone with some amazing momentum…”

You still have the leisure to laugh? Deije’ pluck is to be commended.
His bulging pectoralis muscles expand further, and he raises a fierce voice.

“Men! What are you doing spacing out!? Our opponent is the Demon Lord alone! Forward!”

The air quivers.
Having heard Deije’s reprimand, the Third Brigade that had come to a halt dashed forward violently.
Their force was like a Tsunami. Even after seeing the Demon Lord’s power, even after the zone was taken, they didn’t fall back.

“Girly, even if you’ve got power, you lack guts. I’ll bet you’ve got a lot on your mind, but to those normal folk down there, if we give up on battle, it’s the end, right? Ki ki ki, you aren’t strong enough to be able to sleep on the battlefield yet.”

“… That’s right.”

But at this rate, our annihilation is inevitable.
Deije’s words may be on the mark, but they’re also a death sentence to his men.
Even if it’s the Third Brigade, a hoard of Normal Demons won’t even be able to buy that much time. Because I fought him myself, I can tell.

Tentacles protruded from his coat, mercilessly impaling the Demons on the front lines.
Without even the time to scream, they were dyed pure black, and absorbed.
But the Demon Lord’s mass doesn’t increase in the slightest.

Just how do you expect me to beat an enemy like that…!?

Countless dripping tentacles protruded from all over his body.
He took off the hood covering his face.

“That one’s… a Woman…! Isn’t her appearance quite similar to yours, girly?”

Dark green hair almost black in shade, and eyes of the same color. From the look on her face, she doesn’t even see the army laid out before her.
A Demon’s appearance is irrelevant.

No, the more calming one's appearance, the more dangerous they are. Because that is but another weapon.

Zebul's looks were gentle without a hint of the Gluttony she ruled over.
I'm not sure what was on her mind, as she lorded over the demons around her.

At least we have the numerical advantage. From the Demon Lord's blind spot—I greatly question whether such a thing even exists—anyways, from behind, a lance was stabbed into the Lord.
It definitely pierced the coat, but like that, it continued to be sucked into it. He had let go in time, so the wielder was spared the same fate. He dodged the tentacles that came after him with a back step, but that didn't change the fact he was still unarmed.
In the gap created, another demon deployed a number of fireballs, and hurled them at the Demon Lord. But even that was just swallowed up, and all that remained was silence.
Zebul licked her lips hungrily.

"… That's unfair. Did Gluttony have a skill like that?"

Libell's expression is pale, but his voice is level as he answers.

"It's a mid-level Gluttony Skill. An endless stomach that sucks in any and everything. … But originally, is shouldn't be able to indiscriminately suck in everyone's attacks like that."

"So it's a difference in refinement… Ki ki ki, this is why people who arrive at the summit are… it can't be that Celeste's attack was sucked into that too?"

"I doubt it would be able to swallow something of that level… I think. But if you prevent her mid-level skills, I can't even imagine what her high-level ones will do…"

The Demon Lord doesn't have any particular expression on her face as she just looks around.
Deije has an unpleasant expression as his lips warp. He reluctantly reaches for his sword.
With a single blade, I think I could beat a higher level Demon with four normal level Demon Blades. But now that he's this equipped, I can't see any chances of victory.

"Crap, our eyes just met…"

"Will you run?"

"Don't be stupid, against a high ranking Demon Lord… there's no way I'll be able to get away. Ki ki ki, prepare yourself, Libell Aijens. Think back to the War of Black and White. Compared to that… we're still better off, right? We're only up against one."

On Deije's words of resolution, Libell let out a deep sigh.

"… Well, well, there's no helping it. I've already given up my life once… Deije, I'm not even Envious of your resolve right now."

"Ki ki ki, you're as serious as always. I'm just a little… greedier than most humans."

… There's no helping it. I'll resolve myself as well.
While it may be a fake I created, the Demon Blade in my hand barely has any Magic

left At most, the skills I can use now are Elementary Level.
CQC isn't in Lust's territory, but I draw the knife hanging from my belt.
It's something Leigie-sama bequeathed to me. Of course, it falls far short of Celeste, but it's a Demon Blade all the same. It'll at least buy me an instant of time.

"Girly, you can run, you know? You've barely got any magic left, right?"

"Run? Is that a joke?"

Why must I… I, who was picked up by Leigie-sama abandon my duty when crisis strikes?
Even a mercenary like Deije isn't considering fleeing this desperate situation.
Deije blinks his eyes as if he had witnessed something mysterious.

"Hmm… but no matter how you look at it, a dagger ain't gonna cut it. Can you use a sword?"

"… As much as the next guy."

"Ki ki ki, then so be it. I'll lend you… a single one of my swords. The interest for this transaction is that dagger. Only if we return alive, that is."

Interest?
Just how far does his greed go? I unintentionally laughed.
For him to make business dealings when our lives are on the line…

"Hah… what are you saying at a time like this? Greed sure is something."

"Ki ki ki, when there's a chance to get something, you just have to take it… I mean, there are way too many things I want in this world."

"And the most important of them is life, isn't it?"

"Of course, so I plan on getting my hands on that someday as well."

The sword Deije tossed over was covered in a freezing aura.
It's no Celeste, but I feel power within it that would be more than what a General Class Demon deserved.
Glaring at the Lord who was tossing around the soldiers he trained like scraps of paper, Deije spoke.

"But I have no intentions of dying, though."

"Neither do I."

That's right, we cannot lose. Not with so much regrets left behind.

Part 3: I Cannot Understand

"Oy, you call yourselves the Third Brigade!? How long will you waste on a single Demon!?"

With a line like the trigger of a death flag, Deije burst onto the front lines.

The force of a thousand had, by the work of a single Demon Lord, been reduced to half its size. I'm unsure whether it's amazing or not that half of them even survived. But from a strategic standpoint, this battle is already our complete loss.

Of course, the enemy forces have only one survivor.

The Celeste in Deije's hands lets out heat again, as he lifts it, and swings it towards the ground.
A hot wave of air is let out, raising a dust cloud.
Deije opened his large mouth, and laughed.

"Ki ki ki, so you'll dodge a direct attack like that."

"… Enemy leader."

Zebul's voice was huskier, and more intellectual sounding than I expected.
She drew an ivory-white crescent moon-shaped blade, and began to attack. It was the first direct action that Demon Lord took.
While Deije's body was well trained, with the territorial boost, the Demon Lord greatly outclassed him. His arms continue to get cut up as he tries releasing power. The body of his sword lets off intense heat at the Lord, but her expression remains as cold as ever.
Deije used one of his remaining arms to swing a sword at her, but the tentacles extending from her back shot it down.
Even with six arms, he only has a single body. Compared to this Demon Lord with a seemingly endless amounts of appendages, his plight was close to mere child's play.

"Good skills."

"Ki ki ki, 'tis an honor to be praised by you!!"

His Demon Blade erupts in flames, and the fires lick Zebul's face.
A red flash shoots at her white sword. Fire spreads down her own irregularly sparkling blade, but while it's painful to admit, the Demon Lord calmly took the attack. It's as if she had read all of our movements.

But we had also anticipated that. It's not like we were certain the first strike would decide it.

Deige had attacked head on.
In the gap he made, I lowered my body, and cut at Zebul as well.

There was no order to the tentacle's movements, but they weren't faster than my perception. I used the dagger in my left hand to clear them away, and the ice sword in my left to finish.
For an instant, her body greatly contorted.
The sword swung through empty air, and her eyes turned to me.
Her gaze was hot. They resembled those of the Demon Lord of Lust who embraced her passions, and Deije, who hald his Demon Blade out front.

But these eyes were more sinful. I could only feel repulsed.
As Zebul governs Gluttony, the emotion she's feeling is naturally…

"Two of them… a little small, but they look quite tasty."

… Her Appetite.

She holds a strong desire to eat us, of the same race. Fear runs up my body, and my arm goes stiff.
There are plenty of demons that govern Gluttony out there, but within them, there are few who readily practice cannibalism.

The Devourer, Zebul Glaucus.

The land itself, other demons, and even Demon Lords are on her plate. One whose hunger was great enough to lead her to becoming a Demon Lord.
A tentacle goes through my back and left breast… it pierces my Soul Core. My magic, the organization of my body being stripped away.

"Fumu… a light taste… an illusion…this taste, so you're a Lust-kun…"

The last of my doubles finally vanishes. Phantom Aliquot Dance comes to an end.
With this, I've been reduced to but a single person.

But I've done enough.

"Ki ki ki, not bad, girly!"

In the moment I occupied her attention, Deije launched his attack.
He swung down Celeste at her unoccupied back… in front of the Demon Blade said to destroy even angels, Zebul merely turned her head, and opened her mouth wide.
Nicely lined up fangs, garnished the mouth that spread all across her face. By what order I do not know, but a completely calm response came from the back of her throat.

"A Demon Blade… never eaten one before. It may be a delicacy."

"What!?"

The sword swung down by his strong arms were stopped by her mouth. The red steel is pierced by her fangs.
Flames try to mow down her teeth, but since most of its power had already been devoured, Zebul doesn't show any anguish on her face. Her teeth make a grinding sound as she begins to chew up the sword.
Deije tries to pull it back, but there are no signs of it escaping her mouth.
However, the fact that she was eating the sword meant her main body could no longer move.

Deije lowered another sword with his upper left hand.
Zebul blocked it with her own sword, and locked it down.

Chance!

I lower my body, and sprint towards her before stabbing my sword at her now-defenseless back.
But then, I heard a voice from an unexpected plase/

"Your main body… that magic looks quite delicious."

The back tears open, and a viscous black liquid stains the overcoat.

It was a large mouth. Each and every one of her lined up fangs was about the length of my dagger.
I frantically withdrew my blade, but the long tongue that shot out followed me.
With impossible anatomy, it wound itself around the sword. The cold atmosphere around it freezes the tongue, but without paying any mind, she continues pulling it with amazing force.

"Fufufu, the texture isn't bad…"

Her voice is in high spirits.
She shows no sway in her emotions even when up against demons swinging swords at her.
Her desire is so incomprehensibly deep that I'm not sure it can even be summed up as appetite.

"Ku, monster!"

Deije brings out another sword, and swings it with his left-center arm, and Zebul caught it with her unoccupied hand.
No, that's no hand. In the palm of it… another mouth sprung up.
Those fangs easily bit through the sword's body. Even though it was supposed to be a Demon Blade, a single bite caused countless fragments of metal to scatter.
The tongue from her hand mouth circled to make sure no fragment was lost, before wrapping around the broken blade.

With that timing, without even paying heed to Deije's hand.

"… You have something nice here. It's Tasty. The consistence, and the taste… Not bad at all."

The handle he let go of disappeared into the mouth.
To savor the taste, the hand mouth leisurely started chewing.
Her eyes are colored with supreme bliss.

"This one… my collection…"

"Fufufu, so you're a Greed-kun. I feel my stomach will be satisfied for the first time in a while."

The power of the tongue I was fighting with finally plucked my sword off of me.
I feel bad for Deije, but I back stepped to create distance.
The mouth crunches the sword to pieces. The grinding sound released was as if the sword itself was crying out.
Noticing that, Deije released an exasperated scream.

"O-oy, girly! Don't just let her eat it! That's mine, you know!"

"T-there was no helping it!"

Zebul's tongue continues to float in the air as it searches for new prey.
Rather than me, it goes for the closer Deije.
Before I could call out to warn him, the tongue was knocked down by a large sword.

"… What are you?"

"…"

A giant skeleton… Leigie-sama's Slaughter Doll swung its arms that were now the width of iron poles.
A sword much larger than Zebul dug into the ground.
The earth rends below it, but the skeletons hands don't stop. Those were movements that were definitely impossible for a normal Demon. The sword drew a strange line in the air as it cut forward.
The tongue and Tentacles tried to entwine it, but the sheer momentum of the hunk of iron brushed them off as it came at her face.
The skeleton didn't exude a prescence, and its attacks didn't give off a hint of life.

"Good job!"

Deije reached his hands into the air, and pulled out more swords from his special space.
The Skeleton's physical strength is terrifying. Its arms probably exceed the trained mercenary Deije's in might.
Zebul's expression is colored by panic, and she releases Celeste as she takes some distance.

Celeste is covered in something like mucus, and fine cracks extend along its surface.

"… What could that be… it's not a Demon, it has no presence."

"Ki ki ki, it's just a candlestick holder, you know! Boss's just put a little spell on it!"

The skeleton answers Deije's will, and pushes the sole of its foot into the ground.
Its explosive power rockets it forward, and Zebul blocked it with a perfect stance.
The bastard sword and the Demon Lord's blade locked.
The swings from a body twice the size of Zebul's were as swift as a storm, and with chaotic motions, it continued to try and mow her down.
But Zebul's blade accurately repels it, and her eyes show she's trying to aim for its neck.

"… Doesn't look very tasty. Though I look like this, I'm quite a gourmet."

"…"

Like hell, Devourer!

She lightly dodges the bastard sword, and slashes forward with her ivory-shite sabre.
It took the attack with the upper part of its left arm. The joint area snapped, and the rest of the arm flew into the sky.
But the Doll didn't seem to mind that at all, as it continued to swing the sword in its right. It swiped at Zebul horizontally.

Zebul dodged the attack by lowering her body to the ground.
Even if it doesn't have a sense of pain, it's just a Doll. It's lacking in power to take on a Demon Lord.

It was enough to create an opportunity. The amount of arms and enemies Zebul had to concentrate on increased, and she was left with more openings.
But that's all. None of our attacks even work on her, and our weapons were

indiscriminately eaten up.
The situation is still as bad as it had been. The fact that we're all alive is close to a miracle.
What's more, up until now, Zebul hasn't even used any direct skills.
Her magic power is sky high, and she hasn't used any skill with a high output.

Zebul took a deep sigh as she jumped backwards.

"My, my, what an annoying ingredient… Well, meals tend to taste better if you have to put in the time and effort."

Countless tentacles erupt out of her body. Please cut us some slack already.
Their number and thickness is incomparable to what she displayed before.
I'm starting to doubt whether that small body or the tentacles are this one's real body with how buried she is in them.
Of her body itself, only a single mouth could be seen in the center. This is getting quite grotesque, and her voice hasn't changed in the slightest.

"Demons of Greed… you can get a greater depth of taste if you eat their collections first."

Her words came abruptly.
Her slim figure was overflowing with power. The vague Mana that had been hanging in the air suddenly became concentrated.

"Strangely, Demons of Lust give off an extremely sweet taste. Fufufu, I'll teach you the greatest of pleasure. It's fine, you all are splendid ingredients, so I won't eat you like those other Demons. I'll eat you in the proper way."

That… doesn't actually make me happy at all.
To violate as you eat. To be violated as you're eaten.
Imagining it sends shivers down my spine.
Even as a fellow Devil, I cannot understand it in the slightest.

This is bad. I'm not exactly sure what's bad, but if keep wasting time, something bad's going to happen.
However, my feet won't move. Immense pressure binds my body.
It's a Demon Lord Series skill. While its user cannot move while using it, it can bind the movements of others. It can only bind beings lesser than the caster, but it's more than useful enough to create preparations to use a large skill.
Perhaps Deije is the same. His face is stiff as he opens his mouth.

"This is no joke. Just what is your goal…?"

"Goal…? Let's see, if I had to say… I'm hungry."

The casual words she leaked out made me doubt my ears.
But that line had a meaning much deeper than that.
Endless hunger… I'm glad. Glad that I wasn't born under Gluttony. No, perhaps this one is just abnormal.

"I'm a bit of a heavy eater… At some point, I realized I had finished eating all of my own portion. So there's no helping it. In order to live, I have to eat, and I had an obligation to let my people eat."

"… What about those people?"

"I've already eaten them."

The people lent to him by the Great Demon King were… eaten?
Zebul speaks as if she's giving a simple explanation.

"Well, they were low quality goods, but they did manage to fill my stomach somewhat. Fufufu, it seems my subordinates were satisfied with them, but for me the taste was just terrible… honestly, that Greed-kun's sword was much tastier."

"…"

Even Deije didn't expect that one. He remains silent.
There's no words to return after being told his sword tasted good.
No, the personality that girl has… it'll forever be beyond my comprehension. I mean, even the Second Brigade has some Gluttony Demons, but they're just slightly big eaters, and they haven't leapt this far over the edge.

"Well, I would like to give you peace of mind. You all will… continue to live on within me!"

Countless Tentacles flew at me with a speed incomparable to the attacks she used before.
Something is coming.
That vigilance was the only thing that kept my life attached. The moment the Tentacles came, I instinctively kicked with my feet, which had regained movement, and rolled to the side.
Each and every tentacle drips with a purple fluid, which glittered as it caught the light.
Deije also determined he was screwed, and instead of confronting it, he jumped backwards.

Only the one-armed doll swung its sword to meet the tentacles.
It cut them down as they rained on it from all directions.

But the sword 'slipped'.
The giant blade made a loud sound as it fell.
The tentacle that had successfully knocked away its obstacle wrapped itself around the skeleton, and the silver body that was supposed to be strengthened by Leigie-sama's magic quite literally began to fall to pieces.

"Wha…"

Its ending was so abrupt that Deije had no choice but to raise his voice.
The feelers grabbed the skeletal parts as-is and brought them to a hole that opened in the dark mass.

"… As I thought, it's just normal metal. It isn't even a maic tool or anything… was it controlled by some skill? It isn't very appetizing, but it's not inedible or anything."

"Dammit, in order to get that, do you know just how much trouble I went through? How many Demons I killed…!?"

"Fufufu, it looks like I did something inexcusable. Don't worry, you'll meet up in my

stomach soon enough.”

He cuts down the purple tentacles coming at him with Celeste, and gives tears of grief as he barely dodges them.
One of the Third Brigade Members was caught by one, and easily torn to pieces. A shower of blood disperses into the air, before he was swiftly absorbed into the tentacle.

He was eaten… each and every one of those tentacles… they’re mouths!?

“Even if it isn’t the leader, aren’t they all quite tasty? Nice and powerful.”

“…”

The racing tentacles go out in all directions, and I was unable to perceive them.
My cloak was barely pierced, but the hole made in it gradually began to grow. I immediately cast it away, and exerted myself to dodge the rest.
She isn’t serious. If she was, we’de have died long ago.

The tentacles I dodge either hit the ground, or pierce some other Demon and absorb them. Each and every time that happens, Zebul raises a cry of ecstasy.

Why won’t she get serious?
No, that’s wrong… she’s…

Unable to dodge, my belt was grazed next.
It began to erode my body, so I discarded it.
Again. She isn’t going for me when I’m wide open. She’s…

They extend at me from all sides. I have no time to even counterattack.
This time, my metal breastplate is grazed. Again.
The feeler’s liquid even melts the metal easily. It was probably an item imbued with magic, but that doesn’t seem to matter.
I take off the mail, and take some distance.
With attacks from all directions, where each blow would be fatal, as well as the pressure exerted by the Demon Lord, my stamina is at its limit.

Her attack range is wide, and each time she melts down a Brigade Member, Zebul’s magic is restored.
But above all else, this Demon Lord is definitely going easy on me.

“What are you planning…”

“Fufufu, do you go as far as to crunch the shell when eating?”

Part 4: But I am satisfied

Looking back, from the moment I received life as a devil, this is the complete worst battle I’ve ever gone into.
Even if you count the time I was powerless, huddled in a corner of the slums, I’d never experienced humiliation to this degree.

It’s been one hour since her Tentacles turned purple.
Death lingers all around. The number of Third Brigade members left is easily countable. You could even call it our complete annihilation.
The Demon Lord’s power is tremendous, and I’ll bet there’s no real difference to her whether she’s facing a General or any ordinary Demon.
There weren’t many soldiers that tried to flee, but the portion that did was instantly shot down by tentacles from behind, and dissolved.

Putting aside Deije, who still has Demon Blades on him that allow him to attack the tentacles, the only reason I’m still alive is that Zebul doesn’t seem to have intentions to kill me yet.

Because the Food Preparations for me are taking her time.

She licks her lips. Perhaps because our numbers have decreased, the number of tentacles surrounding her has decreased, and her human form has become visible again, but that doesn’t really hold any meaning.
They’re too fast for me to dodge.

“Fufufu, as expected of Lust… what pretty skin you have there. You may be lacking in physique, but you look like you’ll taste splendid. What fun.”

The hunger that floated in her eyes made the inside of my head burn bright red.
The clothing on my body had all been melted, and had disappeared into her stomach.

In the desert land, with nothing to cover myself, and no chance to even conceal with my hands as I ran away; the sight could only be looked on as humorous.
My body feels heavy as lead, and from my first extensive exercise in a long time, I’m getting light headed.
But I cannot give up.

“But this is strange… for a Lust Demon, the scent of Lust on you is too weak… you, Closet Pervert?”

She threw out those words in a joking tone. How rude.

“Ki ki ki, Exactly my sentiment. I’d have liked to see you like that on the bed and not in a place like this!”

He lets out some impudent words as he tries attacking again after tens of failures.
The only thing he has left is Celeste. But his sword still had powers in it beyond a normal one. Its divine flames manifest a violent maelstrom of fire, and send it at Zebul.

“Well, well, you don’t know when to give up… honestly, the flames are tasty, but they won’t settle down in my stomach. I guess I don’t really like them.”

But even that doesn’t work. In a motion I’ve seen countless times by now, Zebul opens her mouth.
As if it were being sucked in, the flames are drawn to that small hole, where they dissapear.

“… Damn, no matter how you look at it, that’s cheating…”

“Fufufu, don’t mind it, you guys are… much stronger than that Demon Lord I ate the

day before last. That's truly a frightening sword."

"Ki ki ki, so it's just the sword!"

"Fufufu, in ten thousand years, perhaps you may be able to reach at least the footholds of my desire, I guess."

"… So do you have any intentions of letting us off?"

"I'm too hungry for that!"

Wrapped by the tentacles, yet another Demon was sucked in.
The ground the purple liquid touches desolve, and many holes open up.

"Oy, Medea…"

"… What?"

"Just one, there's still something we can try."

Deije speaks with an expression overcome by fatigue. His treasured swords were eaten, and his eyes are filled with hostility towards the Demon Lord in front of him.

"You… give me your『Phantom Aliquot Dance』."

"…Ha? What are you talking about?"

Deije glares at the Lord with stern eyes. Is the fact she's not launching an attack right now due to her leisure?

"That skill… it's one that births illusions with physical form, right?"

"… Yeah, to put it more specifically, it creates illusions, and the real body can freely swap to any one of them if within range."

When you're killed, it's a skill that can make your real body the illusion. Such is the power of the skill you have to climb up quite high on the Luxuria Skill Tree to obtain,『Phantom Aliquot Dance』. It's a powerful skill where, until one of them is attacked, all of them can be classified as the real body. That's why any resistance to Mental Corruption cannot see through it.

"Close enough. Girly, listen close. Right now, we have no means of beating Zebul. Just barely, if a chance is ever to come, our hope lies on this sword."

He holds up the cracked and torn Demon Blade.
Truly, attacks from Celeste are the only ones she takes the time to defend against. No, she's still eating them, but there's no doubt she has to take some sort of action. Since she does that every time, if she doesn't she should take some damage.
But I doubt we'll be able to take her out in a single strike.

"I'll take your『Phantom Aliquot Dance』with my『Skill Ruler』, and using it, I'll fry that bastard with Celeste from all directions."

Those words were something I could not believe.
I unintentionally raised my free hand to cover my breasts. Deije's eyes were serious.

"That can't be… 『Phantom Aliquot Dance』 is an SS Class Skill, you know? Using that on top of invoking Celeste's power is… impossible."

"Ki ki ki, so all it means is… it's a problem of Magical Power… even so, if we don't do something now, we'll just get eaten. We'll be turned into some strange fancy dish."

He's… correct.
Even if we nedlessly waste time here, defeat is inevitable. Then it's not bad to make a bet.
I give a small nod.

"Fufufu, have you finished your discussion? My hunger is just about at its limit, guys."

"Yeah… Ki ki ki, we'll roast you whole."

I take the hand Deije offered to me.
The second I touched it, a skill from the Greed Tree, 『Skill Ruler』 was activated.

『Skill Ruler』 is, as the name sounds, a Greed Skill that steals the Skills of others. It's the most famous skill on the tree.
There are various complex conditions that have to be met, so you can't fulfill them on the battlefield to take an enemy's skills, but you can still manipulate stolen skills freely, and you can even strengthen them. A powerful Skilll.
This especially goes for Class Skills that can only be unlocked by fulfilling Original Sin.
Skill Ruler can ignore the prerequisites, and unlock limitless merits. Because the harder they are to unlock, the more powerful a Demon's skills are.

I felt an uncomfortable sensation as if my entire body was searched over. I somehow stomached that disgusting feeling by gritting my teeth.
But Deije's face soon warped, and he muttered in amazement.

"This can't be… the Skill 『Phantom Aliquot Dance』… isn't there… what the hell!?"

"Eh!?"

He put in more power, and gripped my hand with force that made me question whether or not it would break.
My existence was probed left and right.

"Gone… dammit… this can't be. I should have fulfilled the conditions already!! Even if it's an SS Class Skill, it can't be that I can't find it… impossible!!"

"… Could it be that you're not proficient enough to use it or something?"

My words were quickly denied.
With eyes as if he was looking down at a monster.

"Nonononono, Skill Ruler isn't… that sort of skill. Girly, are you really capable of using that skill?

"… Didn't you just see me using it back then?""

"… Still… dammit, there's no time. No helping it, I'll lend you Celeste. You do it!"

Impossible. That's definitely impossible.
There's a clear difference in swordsmanship level between me and Deije. It's not just a manner of skill; muscle mass, the way we carry ourselves, and even our daily habits, the way we've lived our lives up until now, the small differences in movement outside of our perception.
I cannot handle Celeste. Even if it's just letting out flames, a Demon Blade of this level depends greatly on the wielder, and in the first place, I don't have the magic left in me to use『Phantom Aliquot Dance』.

"No good… I don't have enough Magical Energy in me to use the『Phantom Aliquot Dance』skill."

"Ku, then I guess it's finally time… for us to be praying for a miracle."

His sharp eyes turned to the aloof Demon Lord.

Miracle?

That word made a light flash in my mind.

… No, not like that, but just one… there's just one way this'll work.
It isn't something grand enough to usher in our victory, but there was still one way I could use to recover magic.
Still, if I did use it, my true nature would leak out. No, I've already used it once before.
Being found out is only a matter of time…

I looked at Deije's face. It's not one I like at all.
He's a man who's built up more distinguished service than me.

But we're not at a level where I can care about like or hate.
I prepared myself, and opened my mouth.

"Deije… um, I'm…"

"… What? … What sort of miracle is this?"

His expression turned to one in a trance. It was the same expression as when he had scortched the desert, only to find Zebul still alive and well.
A face that came when something outside the realm of common sense had happened.
He overlooks me with eyes as if he doubted whether or not he was dreaming.

"Girly, can you feel that?"

Eh? …Ah! …Eh!?"

A few seconds late, I noticed as well.
The meaning of his words.

The wind was blown away. The unstagnating black wind that seemed to carry everything away.
I looked at the palm of my own hand, dumbfound. A slight bit of power returns to my exhausted body, and some magic returns to my empty tank.
The sticky feeling Zebul gave off was washed away.

"Leigie-sama's 『Abyss Zone』 was… revived!?"

"… Why… at this point, why is Boss's Zone…"

Right, after all this time.
『Abyss Zone』 wasn't a skill that could be readily manipulated. Sure, if a Demon Lord had considerable power, the scope and output would rise, but that's based on their base abilities, and it isn't something they can consciously control.

Zebul noticed as well. She looks bewildered.
It seems her power isn't impacted in itself, but she's probably questioning how the territory she was able to construct without problem was suddenly broken without warning.

"… Oy, oy, what did you guys do? Is this part of your plan?"

As if.
『Abyss Zone』 is only reserved for Demon Lords. Neither me nor Deije are going awaken to it all of a sudden.
That in itself would take more than a miracle.

But the real miracle was yet to come.

Deije suddenly opened his eyes wide.
His lip trembles, and his arms lose power as Celeste falls to the ground.
An obvious gap in defense. If that Lord over there were to attack now, we would have been bitten to death.

"How… why, at this time… no, in the first place… that's impossible."

But I have no time to pay him any mind.
Because I had noticed what was in the direction he was looking.

Elegant black hair, well cared for (by the maids). Unhealthy pale skin without a single blemish. The jet-black overcoat he wore, befitting of one who reigned over the night, was said to be something handed down by the Great Demon King, but no one knows the truth of the matter.
Of course without a blade, or a weapon of any kind. Not even a crown to honor his title. He wasn't wearing a single ornament.
From inside his black clothing, that looked to be woven with high class silk, a sloven plain shirt was visible. Since he wasn't wearing a belt, he wasn't going to be doing any extreme movement, but even now, his pants looked like they were about to slip off.

In all sense of the word, that visage wasn't one that should be appearing on the battlefield. No, there's no way it could have appeared.
Even a random spear falling from the sky and accidentally killing the Demon Lord would be more believable.

"Medea… is that your illusion?"

"… Of course not."

I don't have the time, and there would be no meaning.
Making an illusion of my own master? He's too awe-inspiring for me to be able to do

such a thing.

"… I see, so it's Zebul's illusion… Ah, that was surprising. I mean, there's no way Boss would appear in a place like this."

"… So that's it… if it's that, then I can believe it."

My frozen thoughts were thawed by Deije bringing up a situation that was actually plausible.
I see… just how vile is this Demon Lord? Even if we were on the brink of death, to show us an image of Leigie-sama… is this a part of her cooking?
Using the carrot and stick raises the flavor?
Regardless, don't scare me like that. I thought my heart was going to stop even before she killed me.
My heart is still going off like an alarm due to the impact.

Even so, that's really well made.
It's been quite a while since I last looked upon Leigie-sama's form. And seeing him walking around outside, just how many years has it been? Even if I look through all of my memory, the first time I met him was the first and last I ever saw him out here, and it probably won't happen any time soon.
The reason his hair is so glossy despite its messiness is because the maids are hard-put keeping it in order while trying not to wake him, and his pale skin is likely a result of him not going out three hundred and sixty five days a year. His nature and each and every detail was completely reproduced.
Even his expression was the sleepy one he made when in his room, and his swaying stance was one where I wanted to rush to him this instant to support his body.

"That's quite something… it really is identical. If the Boss ever actually stood up, he'd probably look like that."

"… Right …Ah!!"

At that moment, I noticed something important.
I'm… not wearing anything right now!
I hurriedly sit down to hide myself. Even if it may be an illusion, standing before my lord with not a cloth on my back is something that should never come to be. Even if Leigie-same isn't interested in me in the slightest.
The inside of my head is burning red, as if it had been painted with embarrassment itself, and noticing there were things I couldn't hide even in this position, I turned to Deije.

"Deije… mantle."

"… Sure."

He casts off his tattered mantle, and I somehow use it to cover my body. Like this, I won't be able to move well, but this isn't the time to be worried about that.
Deije keeps his eyes locked, on the illusion's actions.

"… Oy, oy, that boss has already started sleeping. In front of Zebul."

"They really are identical."

Still with a bewildered expression, Zebul raised her voice to the illusion of Leigie-sama that had suddenly appeared.

"… You. Who are you?"

"… I see."

The illusion, with an expression indicating he wasn't listening at all, let out some words completely irrelevant to the flow of the conversation.

Chapter 4: Ira's Wrath

Part 1: Just Remembering it Pisses Me Off

In novels, I've read that there's nothing more troublesome than an incompetent yet hard worker, but if you'll let me state my personal opinion, in this world, there is nothing more aggravating than a ridiculously competent slacker.

The Demon Lord I've been dispatched to keep an eye on – The King of Sloth, Leigie of the Slaughterdolls- is perhaps the best fitting for that phrase in the world. One of these guys is more than enough.

Of the ones who ally to the Great Demon King『Kanon Iralaude』, a total of 19 have reached Demon Lord Class, but of Demon Lords selected by the Original Sin of Sloth, there is only one.
Compared to a normal Demon's skills, a Demon Lord's are exceedingly powerful, and while it changes based on the Skill Tree, all of them are extremely useful. Therefore, the Demon Lord who advanced his Sloth Skills to the limit was, quite annoyingly, classified as a precious existence, and that formed a sort of buffer zone where no one could really say anything against his behavior.
I must follow my orders, and produce results. But he doesn't seem to want cause any insurrections, and all he does is just lie around. How annoying.

The current Great Demon King, Kanon-sama is a Demon Lord that is connoted with Ira. The Ira attribute specializes in offensive power, and its single targeting power far surpasses the Gula series, which is also said to boast high offense. However, the Acedia Series, annoyingly enough, is said to be the only Skill Tree out of all of them that excels in pure stamina. All demons have some Defensive skill or another, but the Sloth Tree far surpasses common sense in that regard.
Pointless VIT that seems to have been thrown in for no real reason, on top of a presumptuously enormous amount of HP. What's more, they have specialized resistances to attacks of every attribute, and status abnormalities. With their explosive VIT, they rarely ever feel pain.

On the other hand, they're lacking in Dexterity, and Offensive power, but I doubt such a thing is necessary.
Without any meaning, like stones on the ground, like shellfish in the sea, those guys just exist there without doing anything.

Why must we waste our own power to try and chip at those existences that resemble inorganic matter? The Great Demon Kings of old probably thought along those lines.
From my point of view, taking in a King of Sloth as a subordinate was one of the greatest mistakes ever committed by the first Great Demon Lord.

They are without a doubt detrimental existences. That's why my stress against that indestructible wimp just continues to build up without end. I've collected an indescribable amount of Wrath, and while it's been almost a thousand years since my birth, I've never felt this much anger against a specific something ever before.

Those were the contents of the regular report I submitted to Kanon with the resolve that I was going to get killed. She burst into laughter. It was the first time I ever saw the Great Demon King of Wrath laugh to this extent.

The Great Demon King's hand-picked corps that acts as her eyes and ears, the『Order of Black』.
The Demons that make it up have been filtered through by various processes, making it a prestigious and elite brigade. It's not an exaggeration to say they're the ones leading the Great Demon King's Army, and that they're the king's personal royal guard.
In reality, about one fifth of the world's Demon Kings were once part of the Order, and when you think about how the current Great Demon King Kanon originated from it as well, it's easy to understand just how refined of a history this Order has.
The members that make it up are sent out in different squadrons to look over the actions of the Demon Lords allied to the Great Demon King- by the desire they held, was it likely for them to quietly obey another or not. We observe their conduct in great detail, at times delivering decrees from the King, at times, offering warnings, at times fighting alongside them, and at times searching for signs of rebellion before they can carry anything out.
But as we are dispatches, it's an exceedingly dangerous mission where we have to serve another Demon Lord, and by its nature, it's a crucial one where negligence isn't permitted.

Even so, after receiving top-class reports for my military service, I, Lize Bloodcross, was unable to understand why I was sent alone to do the mission that usually required teams of three, and even though I governed Wrath, just as Kanon did, I couldn't understand the meaning behind me being sent to watch over Sloth, the complete opposite nature. It was unbearable.

Originally, inspections were to be carried out by Demons of the same attribute, or at least by ones of similar nature. While it may be the decision of the Great Demon King, I am completely unable to comprehend his divine will. I'm at my wits end. Thus, I cannot avoid issuing a protest. Even if that is to end in my death.

On a giant throne of obsidian, Great Demon King Kanon Iralaude had laughed so much that tears were coming out of her eyes, as she propped herself up with her staff.
Kanon-sama is a female Demon. Her height was close to a man's, and the personification of her Wrath, her crimson hair the color of the flames of hell boiled and let off fumes like lava. The tips of it tickled the armrests of the throne
Even with a few meters between us, the exalted atmosphere I sensed was proof of the unfathomable power she commanded as the Great Demon King.

But her authority is quite wasted. In various ways. And as I may add, todays Demon King-sama is in a rare good mood.
She clears her throat, and stares at me with her red hot eyes.

"And, Lize Bloodcross. If that be the case, then what exactly is it that you want?"

"Yes, it is my suggestion that we just kill Leigie-sama already, divide up his territory, and assign it to the other Demon Lords loyal to you."

I stated what was on my mind directly to the Great Demon King.
Perhaps she had expected my objection. She immediately threw out a reply.
My objection was in opposition to the Great Demon King's will, so it wouldn't be strange for my head to fly off at any moment, but there wasn't even a fragment of anger in her eyes.

"I see… then who will kill him? As the sole Demon Lord that governs Sloth, he merely wastes his eternity on naught. How shall we kill a Demon Lord like that?"

"That is…"

That in itself was the reason I spent several months bearing my anger and serving him.
I do possess General level power, and my attribute is the one most suited for offense, but while he was taking such attacks, of all things… that Demon Lord started sleeping.
As if he was saying that there was no need to pay any mind to attacks of my measly level.

Just remembering it pisses me off.
Hot blood circulated through my body with my Soul Core as the center, and my vision was dyed red. I took deep breathes to try and calm myself, but it didn't have any effect.

"Ku ku ku, by the look of it, you've already tried it yourself…"

"… Yes, I understand that I have overstepped my authority, but I was unable to hold back my Wrath…"

Kanon-sama received those words with eyes filled with pleasure.

"I'll permit it. Ku ku ku, Lize… you resemble… the me of the past."

"!? Yes… 'tis an honor."

Just what does she mean?
I cannot understand Kanon-sama's thoughts. I cannot comprehend. It's not like I'm angry. My thought come together again, and I instantly kneel before her.
With an expression completely unfitting of her moniker, Kanon of Ruin, she looked at me with soothing eyes.

"Anyways, Lize. That man won't die… of course, if you find a way to kill him, I mind not if you carry it out, but… Lize, I'm counting on you."

"… Yes. I will put in my utmost effort in order to answer your expectations, my liege."

On her sudden words, I hurriedly corrected my posture, and from her sudden expectations, I hid my face.

Will I ever be able to live up to such hopes?
The Demon Lord of Sloth has peerless powers, and in his speech, loyalty to the Great Demon King, and his treatment of me, a direct emissary of her… towards all of it, he has not a fragment of interest.
Against that Demon who's shut himself in his own closed world, what is it that I can do?
Is there anything I can change in the slightest? No matter the time, I've always cut open my own path with my own will, but I have no confidence for myself on this trial.
Our affinity is… just too bad.

"Good… I understand your plea. But there is a reason you were appointed Leigie's observer. Find it out for yourself."

That was something I did not expect from the King's mouth. The weight I feel on the back of my head. An invisible pressure is holding me down. Lifting my head isn't permitted.
It may be obvious, but on her statement, me questioning further would be foolish.

"Yes. Please excuse me, Lize Bloodcross. All is as Kanon-sama wishes it."

"Good. Then march onwards. You have the makings of a ruler. So learn. Study it, understand it. The meaning of being a Demon."

"Yes… without fail."

There was no playfulness in the Great Demon King's words.
Her each of her direct, passing words were engraved in my Soul Core.

But I cannot understand what she means in the slightest.
Something to learn from that Lazy King…?
From that Demon Lord… from the Demon Lord whose sin was so strong it caused my predecessor, a Demon of Sloth, to abandon his responsibility. As someone with the polar opposite nature, just what am I supposed to learn?
Perhaps by the time I learn that, I will have answered to the Great Demon King's expectations.

I lower my head greatly, and the moment I had stepped through the door, Kanon-sama spoke.
Another voice unbefitting the Demon King of Ruin. A tired voice.

"Lize, once you return to the Castle of Shadows, go tell Leigie-Niisama… at least drop by now and again."

"… Eh!? Niisama!?"

I definitely did not have to hear that.
I turned around in a panic. It seems Kanon realized what it was she had just said, as she was clicking her tongue. With a grim expression, she pointed her staff at me.
The sin of Wrath, said to return everything in the world to ash.
The glint in her eyes was like a raging fire, as if to block any objection from me.
With this pressure, I was able to get out but a few words before my heart gave in.

"Kanon, just now…"

"Onwards, Lize Bloodcross! Don't… trouble me any further!"

"Y-yes!"

As if she was driving me away, she slammed the doors.
Angry words from the Demon Lord of Wrath were definitely nothing rare. The two guards standing in front of the Great Demon King's room remain unmoving, but they turn eyes filled with sympathy at me. I nod to them before going forward.

I see… Even if he's a rare Sloth Demon Lord Specimen, so this is why Kanon, who governs Wrath leaves him be…
Wrath's direct attack ability is second to none, but on the other hand, it's hard to keep followers unharmed.

I get the feeling I just caught a glimpse of some of the Great Demon King's black history. It's a bit dejecting.

Part 2: Go to Hell!

Today, once again, the Demon Lord I was charged with observing was at peace.

Even though the morning sun had risen, the bed remained stuffed with the thick lump that was Leigie, and he isn't moving in the slightest. At this point, I'm even beginning to question whether he's still alive.
Ever since the Great Demon King gave me some words of encouragement, I've been carefully watching him, but no matter how you look at it, this Demon Lord is just way too much of a Sloth.
There are times when a Wrath like me isn't angry, but Leigie-sama has never slacked on his duty.

Is that supposed to be the difference between a normal Demon and a Demon Lord? No, that's probably wrong. According to the others of the Order of Black sent to watch Demon Lords, they're just a bit further out than normal Demons, and it seems that they've never run into any others stoically continuing to pursue their own attributes as much as Leigie. Really, he should just drop dead.
In an irritated state, I started writing in my Demon Lord Observation Diary.
I unintentionally opened my eyes wide. This is surprising. This is quite severe.

There… isn't a single thing to report.

He doesn't train his skills, and without any training, I doubt he'll go step into a battle. He doesn't establish communication with his retainers, and he doesn't participate in the war councils. Everything revolves around the people working outside of his watch. I am here witnessing the perfected form of a single type of monarchy. But it's definitely something different from the phrase『The King Reigns, but Does not Govern』.
(TL: This is apparently a line from the political doctrine of the Commonwealth of the Two Nations)
No, it's just that he isn't thinking about anything at all.
Are you even conscious of what your role in all this is, De~ Mon~ Lord~ Sa~ Ma~?

How does this army hold itself together? No, seriously.
It was just too pitiful that my stress is building up, and that gets converted to anger. As a result, for me who had never really had too much to anger me in life, My Wrath Skill Tree experienced sudden extreme growth. I'm not happy about it at all.

I sat irritated in my usual chair as I glared scornfully at the bed.
Even when I'm releasing this much bloodlust, why is it that he isn't waking in the slightest…!?
And while that was happening, the clock hit a certain time, and the source of all evil appeared cart-in-hand.

She open the door without making a single sound, and quietly entered with elegant bearing. In a soft voice, she alerted him of that time.
It was the closest connection Leigie's army had to their Demon Lord. It was…

"…Leigie-sama, it's time for your meal…"

The maid.
She wore dated office worker clothing, and was a prim and proper beautiful Demon. I don't know her Attribute, but she doesn't look suited for battle, so I guess she might not have one.
In the categorization system decided by the Human Race, the category of Demons known as Wraiths, has many born with nothing but the innate instinct to cause harm to others, but occasionally, a Demon without such desires is born of them.
In that case, what comes out is a Demon that doesn't reign over any Original Sin. There are also child Demons whose spirits are too immature for them to embrace any cravings, but for them to continue to grow up in that state is rare. I've heard that it can happen, though.
If that girl actually embraced some sin, then there's no way she would be this devoted to Leigie-sama. Because this Demon Lord is trash.

Her name is Lorna. She doesn't have a last. Since I was dispatched here, she's the one I've had to interact with the most.
Her wide pretty blue eyes, and the golden hair that was evenly cut at her shoulders were her most notable characteristics. She's probably my age, if not a little younger.
At the same time, she's the source of all of this. Because this girl spoils that Demon Lord in every sense of the term, Leigie-sama will never work no matter how much time passes.
I've protested time and again, but there are no signs of her stopping her work. For a girl like this to be wasted on a demon that does not but covet indolence, 'tis the end of the world. If it turned out that this girl was actually the one pulling all the strings, I don't think I would actually be surprised.
I honestly think this world would be a better place without her. But she doesn't die. There's no worry of her falling in battle. Because she doesn't go out in the battles.

On Lorna's whisper of food, the Demon Lord's head slowly began to project out of the covers. His eyes are half-closed, and he's still lying face-down. This is the only time of day I can regularly see that man's deplorable face. Even though he's unarmed, if you launch an attack, Leigie-sama doesn't take a single point of damage. I know because I've tried it a few times.

Just what sort of Skills does Sloth have?
Within all the Skill Trees held by the Demon Class, the one with the least information about it known is without a doubt the Sloth Skill Tree.

Demons of Sloth don't usually use skills by choice. If you ask why, it's precisely because they are Sloth. And so, a majority of Sloth's skills aren't widely known. Of course, among them, there isn't anyone diligent enough to painstakingly record down their skills either. It's no real mystery why it's a mystery. Don't. Screw. With. Me!

Just what thoughts are going through their heads as they continue to pursue that laziness?
Just what are they trying to do by cultivating a set of skills that they'll never use?
Every time I think about that, it feels like I'm observing some sort of foreign animal. And I feel my entire body get engulfed by a feeling of weakness. Just die already.

The scarce information that's been passed around denotes that Sloth skills excel in endurance, and that they have skills that allow them to slow down others'

movements. There's also the Slaughter Dolls Leigie-sama is so known for: a skill for giving life to dolls. But that's about it.
That may be all, but I also think that's more than enough information in a sense. I mean, it's not like that lump over there's going to use a skill anyways.

With his eyes closed, Leigie-sama opened his mouth.
Lorna accepted that action with a beaming smile, scooped up some food with a spoon, and inserted it in his mouth. It was like watching a mother bird feed its young.

One surprising thing was that this Demon Lord didn't even lift a finger to eat!
Just quit it already! Like Hell this thing is a Demon Lord! Apologize to all those Demons diligently working out there!
Even if you're successfully fulfilling your cravings, APOLOGIZE TO ALL THOSE DEMONS WHO COULDN'T BECOME LORDS!
I grit my teeth, and screamed only within my heart. My mental sanity was in danger. In various ways.

And Lorna, you need to stop too!

It's that. The more I learn of his slovenly lifestyle, my evaluation of Leigie, as well as those of the other Demons who couldn't become Demon Lords, even though this thing somehow accomplished it is dropping. I'm included. And that makes me pissed off all the more.

As I stood up by reflex, Lorna turns her eyes to me.
As I sigh, she gently sets the spoon on the plate, and puts her hand on her hip, as if worn out.

"Day, by day, by day. Just what is it that you're so dissatisfied with?"

With that gesture, I heard something snap somewhere in my head.
Leigie yawned.

"What? Me, dissatisfied? There should be a limit to making fun of me!!"

Just because he's a Demon Lord, he's underestimating me…

I lose my rationality for a moment, and my Wrath blazes up. It rushes around my body along with my blood.

Just how much must I bear with? Why must I live like this… If Kanon-sama won't dispose of him, then I'll settle this in her place…
However, even when I've reached a stage like this… he won't pay me any mind.
With his eyes still closed, he sways his head back and forth. I'm getting a sudden impulse to go kick that head like a soccer ball.
Dammit… I've already tried that one long ago. It didn't give him a single scratch.

Then to give him a scratch, all that's left is my『Ira』Skills.
I take deep breaths, and try to manage the violent emotions running about my head.
It creates too much of an opening, so I can't use it in battle, but let's take some sweet time, and gather up power.
With my rage as the fuel, I'll obliterate my enemy. That is the basis of『Ira』skills.

"Looking down on me… in Kanon-sama's place… I'll beat you to death…"

The『Ira』skill I have with the highest output.
Fire born from a Demon's heart, my Soul Core, well up from my feet, and rise into the heavens as a pillar of flames.

On the Skill Tree, it's an upper class skill ranked S. Of the skills I can use, it's the most powerful.

『Rage Flame』

Lorna winced as she was buffeted with the high temperature with that came as a side effect.
The blast sends the tableware flying, and it crashes into the wall before shattering into small pieces.
While it may just be an aftereffect, it's a heat beyond what a normal Demon can stand. The skin on Lorna's arms instantly begins to burn, and the room is filled with the unpleasant scent of roasting meat. She scowls, steps back, and covers her skin, but this isn't a heat that can be avoided by something of that extent.

"… Lorna, move. It's not my problem if you're caught up in this."

"… It's useless. With『Wrath』of that level… you won't be able to breach Leigie-sama's『Sloth』."

… Looking down on me.
I suppress the feeling of the flames burning myself, and raise it to a heat I'd never attained before. The barrier protecting the ceiling shatters, and the stone above melts before dripping to the floor.
Words are taken as fuel, and the inside of my head gets redder and redder. The flame wrapped around my arms change to a shade of crimson mixed with black.
The cuff of Lorna's clothes ignite, and the flame starts to spread.
But without even trying to put it out, she continued to pat Leigie's head. He hadn't even opened his eyes. Her mouth approached his ear.
And she voiced some unbelievable words.

"Leigie-sama… I have a younger sister. If I'm ever to dissapear, it's set that she will be the one to take care you you in my place."

"I see."

Lorna doesn't seem to be giving any care to her own life.
And the Lord of Sloth doesn't have a hint of interest towards that fact. Leigie doesn't even open his eyes… He doesn't even look at Lorna's face.

"Idiotic… you plan to die here?"

"Ku… I do not have anything to block what you've over there, Lize. No matter what I do, it will kill me in the end. That is all."

While withstanding the pain, her words came out in a level tone, adding more fuel to my flames of wrath.
The flame spreads up the fabric, and the king sized bed is engulfed in it. Lorna doesn't try to cover herself. With her body alight, she continues to gaze at the closed-eyed Leigie.
The flames were my anger in itself. Their nature was different than simple physical

fire. They had powers fitting for them to be called flames of hell, the ability to turn all matter to ash. In this wide world, they're perhaps what has the greatest destructive capability. They even surpass the magic fire used by the Spirit Race.
Information about the target of my flames enters my head.

Lorna's body constructed of Soul only has a slight fire resistance from the basic Demon Tree. She's easily burned through as she becomes food for the flames.
The reason she's still alive is that this is only a secondary effect with not even a fraction of the skill's power.
If I released the skill, then even if I didn't aim for her, she would easily…even easier than a scrap of paper, her soul and all else would turn to ash.

"Ask your lord to save you."

"You're making… a mistake. Lize Bloodcross."

Her entire body burns away bit by bit, and her head dressed in charcoal made me find it amazing she was still alive. With those burnt eye sockets, she looked at me.
What was in her eyes was nothingness. Her entire body disappearing, she lets out not a single scream of pain, as if she were merely waiting to greet an inevitable demise. It was more repulsing than anything I had ever seen before.
And like that, Lorna smiled.

"… Sloth is… without thinking anything… without creating anything… without saving anything… without letting your feelings be moved… just existing as you wish it."

"!?"

The all-important Leigie was, even with the flames of hell said to destroy any and everything surrounding him, not stirring at all.

Not a single hair on his head, or a single patch of skin was burned. Even though there's no sign of him using any sort of skill!
In front of his eyes… even when the loyal Demon who's served him faithfully up until now is burning!
Even when everything in his world is being reduced to cinders!

That fact made my mind leave me.
It felt like my head would split, that even burning everything in this world wasn't enough. That sort of anger penetrated my head. The heat of the flames increases even further.

At that moment, Leigie opened his eyes for the first time, and murmured.
For the first time, his eyes turn towards me. His expression seems troubled.

"… It's hot."

What the hell is he saying… this one…
I can see that his face is stiff. Words I cannot understand. A way of life I cannot understand.
Without an iota of hesitation, I activated the skill.

"… Go to hell! Leigie!"

"… I see."

With an unpleasant expression, Leigie sighed.
He turned the palm of his hand to me… in the face of the black flames, he said a single word.

"Iyo."

That was the first moment I had understood that the Demon Lord had activated a skill. Even without saying the Skill name.
Right before it hit him, with a speed much faster than my own skill.

What was supposed to protect my soul, the Mental Pollution Resistance skill was instantly breached without being able to offer any resistance in the slightest. My instincts told me.

The impact was great enough to shake my Soul Core. My Field of vision was in chaos, and my thoughts went all over the place.

The heat inside of my head was instantly cut off.

As if those feelings had been a lie, a hole was pierced through my heart. What should have been there was the mental hell of Wrath, but the driving force that was my anger turned off, and died out. The flames that had been raging in the surroundings, the flames that had been burning Lorna, as if any and everything had been a dream.

"What… did you…"

I look at my palm, from which the black flame had disappeared.

I should… have been angry. I definitely had been embracing anger and hatred great enough to burn everything to the ground.
My memory still remains. Until a few seconds ago, I should have been in a rage, but… now I don't really care.
The disparity between my emotions and my memory become a cold wind, sending shivers down my spine. Something must have happened to create the empty gap within my mind.
My knees give out on me, and I kneeled on the ground that had rapidly cooled after losing its heat.

I don't understand. I don't understand anything. I don't understand my emotions of anger. How. Why was I angry? How did I get so angry? My memory won't provide me with those answers.
Without paying any mind to my worries, within the ashes, and with a troubled expression, in his tattered bedding, Leigie rolled over.

There is only one theory that could possibly explain this abnormal situation.

… This is… a Skill of Sloth.

Lying on his back, Leigie's eyes turned in my direction.

"…"

But without saying anything, he closed them.

His impudent behavior lit another spark within me.
Say something already…

Part 3: Who the Hell Does He Think He's Supposed to Be?

"Are you not going to kill me for opposing you?"

"… If you want to die, then go do that by yourself. Ah, but first, go tell them that they should send a Sloth next time."

Hah.
Leigie let out a troubled sigh.
With those words, I became certain that my own actions had absolutely no effect on this Demon Lord.
He really is a man with no hopes of salvation. Kanon's tired words float in my mind.

A skill to overwrite one's cravings with Sloth.

That's my conjecture as to the skill this Demon Lord used only once. I don't even know its name.
At that moment, the hell within my heart was completely buried up.

And if that's truly the case, then that is… the strongest skill for a Demon. I mean, a Demon's battle ability rises in proportion to the extent of their longings. Just as my『Wrath Flames』scaled off my anger, to rapidly increase its output.
It's not something limited to Wrath, the others are the same. Without a thirst for material possessions, Greed Skills are unusable, and without hunger, Gluttony Skills won't have any decent firepower.
His skill is bullshit. Normally, a skill of this type would be blocked by the Mental Corruption Resistance on the Basic Demon Tree, but this Demon Lord somehow breached it in an instant. That means that skill can't be blocked by standard means, and that skills that can't be withstood by it truly do exist.
I'm not sure if it'll work even on a Demon Lord, but if it does, then even Demon Lords would be played with like children. And I don't want to think about it, but perhaps the one who holds the seat of Great Demon Lord, Kanon-sama, is the same.
No, more than that, a large majority of Wrath Skills scale directly off of anger, so his power would be even more affective against her.
When I think of the anger smoldering within me, it isn't something that will burn for eternity, but if I think about what would happen if it were suddenly extinguished in battle, I cannot help but feel fear.

Its effect? Its range? Its scope? Its conditions?

Challenging this Demon Lord without knowing any of that is… too dangerous. What's more, he only showed me a single power. When you think about how I have dozens of Wrath Skills, while there's a difference in trees, I can't help but assume this Demon Lord has much more than that.

Leigie-sama is… dangerous. Not because his irritating behavior is poison to my sanity, his power itself is dangerous.
It's likely that Kanon-sama knows this as well. That's why I was dispatched. This

Demon Lord won't do anything troublesome like start a rebellion, but in the million to one chance…
If I cannot obliterate him with Wrath Skills… the other Skill Series which fall behind in pure offensive power won't be able to break his defense.
He said it was hot. That means for a split second, my power definitely had some effect on this Demon Lord. It's impossible for the current me, but if I continue to mature, perhaps I will gain the power to inflict damage on him.

I need to sharpen my blade.
While looking at this man, who possesses unfathomable power, I'll refine myself. That is likely Kanon-sama's… intent.
And at the same, time, make good use of this man's resources, to benefit the Great Demon Lord's army. He's scary as an enemy, but having these Sloth Skills on our side is more than reliable.
Taking on these two challenges simultaneously is my mission, and my trial.
Once I've overcome that, there is no doubt I'd have gained powers incomparable to what I've used up until now.

We were moved to another room, and on top of a bed of the same make, Leigie turned over in his sleep.
In my eyes his form was now that of someone I couldn't underestimate.
It seems that the bedroom I burnt up is in the middle of reconstruction. None of the Demons in Leigie's army said a word about it. Say something already.

At that time, the door made a loud sound as it opened, and a single Demon came in.
It was a girl wearing a maid uniform. Her atmosphere was a bit similar to Lorna, but she was just a little bit younger.
She looked at Leigie-sama, who refused to pop his face out of the covers, took a quick glance at me, and approached the bed. With a face identical to Lorna's, she smiled.

"Leigie-sama! Please~ Wake~ Up~!"

Of all things, she began recklessly shaking the cover the Demon Lord had burrowed under.
The smile and atmosphere are definitely similar. The girl who was probably the sister she was talking about only carried a similar air, and her actions were completely different. This is a fraud.

That's no way to treat that guy, I mean, isn't he supposed to be some sort of king?
At her violent treatment, I unintentionally tried to restrain her when I was supposed to be on the other side.
What the hell is this.

"!? Wai… can't you be a little quieter!?"

"? Ah! You muct be the Lize-san oneechan told me about! I'm called Hiero. I'm the little sister of Lorna, who used to take care of Leigie-sama!"

"Eh, ah, yes."

Without stopping her hand, the girl called Hiero turned only her head to look at me.
She's not displaying the appropriate attitude to the one who burnt her sister to death. No, more so, she's giving a smile reminiscent of a blooming flower.

Even if she's a Demon, she should have at least a bit of affection for her family. Just like I have a sort of loyalty to the Great Demon King.
Of all things, she started speaking in an innocent voice.

"Thank you very much! For killing Oneechan! Because of that, it's finally come around to my turn! Oneechan would never stop working, so I was getting worried!"

Her feelings were just too twisted. Her lack of visible malice made it all the more menacing.
From the time I served directly under the Great Demon King, to when I was assigned here, I've never seen emotions like these.

"Y-you… are those the sort of words you're supposed to direct to your sister's killer!?"

"Eh? Well…"

On my words, Hiero put her index finger to her mouth, and began to think.
And the answer came soon enough. It was an answer I wasn't expecting at all.

"Lize-san, you're too soft. If you're going to try killing her, you have to do it properly…"

"Eh…?"

Her skirt fluttered as she sat on the edge of the bed. From under her skirt that was much shorter than Lorna's, I saw healthy, tanned skin.
As if something was tickling her, she raised a laugh befitting her age.
How does that modest Older Sister get a younger one like this?

(TL: This kusu is laughter. Not sobbing.)

"Kusu kusu kusu, she was still alive… Good grief, oneechan doesn't know when to give up… her luck sure was great. Even if it wasn't a direct hit, for her not to die instantly after taking the『Ira』of a General Class Demon. Even when I thought my turn had finally come, I was going to have to contain myself even longer!"

What shocking news. She was burnt black, but lived!?
No, that's not it. That isn't it. This Demon… what did she just say?

"… Contain yourself even longer… could it be, that you…"

"Nonono, don't misunderstand! Oneechan's still alive, you know? Though she's quite burnt. I mean, killing my own sister is a bit… If I did something like that, kusu kusu kusu, I would become『Invidia』, wouldn't I? Holding onto two sins would be a pain."

An unsettling cheerful voice.
This one is… different. She has no beauty like Lorna. No matter how close their faces, no matter how close their forms, this child is without a doubt one who spreads ill will just by staying alive, an orthodox devil. One with the personality most fit to pursue desire, a『Pure Demon』.

I'm not sure whether she's looking at my expression or not, she lies down face up on top of Leigie, and stares at the decorations on the canopy.

"Oneechan was pretty, wasn't she? She should've been of the same make as me, but she was nice and slim, and tall, and her eyes were wide and clear, her skin was white,

and she always did the housework, but she never got a scratch on her, and her hair was glossy without any damage. Her voice wasn't too high or too low, it was just the right level to comfort the ear, and her breasts were twice the size of mine… a beauty no male Demon would be able to leave alone, and despite her lewdness, she didn't let a single finger touch her body, as she served Leigie-sama in chastity… Her heart was strong, and she didn't draw back a step against『Ira』… Kusu kusu kusu, she really was the ideal woman."

"Le…wd?"

"Oh? Didn't you know? Even like that, Oneecchan's a『Luxuria』 demon, you know? What's more, she's pursued desire enough to get A Class skill, quite powerful. If you look at Demon Ranks, perhaps the rank just before General… she had about as much power as a Knight, I guess."

That's something I cannot believe.

『Luxelia』
Of the 7 Sins that Demons can possess, it's known as the one most unsuited for direct combat.
And among all of them, it's said to be the weakest in resisting attacks as well.
They are weak. Uselessly frail. Especially against Demons with Mental Corruption resistance, a majority of their powers don't work.

But if so, they why…

"Why…"

"I don't know if Oneechan told you, but my household… has ALWAYS served the Demon King of Sloth, Leigie of the Slaughterdolls. Probably from around ten generations ago. Within the house, there's a rule that the strongest Demon would be the one to serve, and in this generation, that was… Lorna oneechan. Until Yesterday, that is."

Yesterday, I burned Lorna in the flames of Wrath. If Hiero's words are to be trusted, she survived, but has lost her power.
And so the generation shifted. To this arrogant sister.

"I've always had a complex against Oneechan. Especially that figure. Oneechan had my ideal form, so… that's why I was always weaker than her."

"Eh? Fi… gure?"

"With『Luxuria』, no matter how high level of a Demon you are, with only A Class skills, you can't… be strong at all. I should have been much stronger. But even so, I couldn't win. I'm thankful to you, Lize-san. Thank you for burning up oneechan's beautiful face."

The tone of her voice dropped for a moment.
And the Demon said…

"Because of that, I was able to…『Overrule』 her…"

All the puzzle pieces were in place.
Hiero forcefully opened up the covers, and shamelessly clung onto Leigie-sama's arm

as he looked at her with empty eyes.

"Leigie-sama, nice to meet you. I think you were listening, but I'll be taking care of you in oneechan's place! I'm called Hiero! I'll be whole-heartedly devoting my time to you, so I hope we get along!"

"… I see."

"The Original Sin I carry is…『Pride』. I'm Hiero of『Superbia』! Please remember it!"

As I thought… a Pride Demon!

『Superbia』
A Demon that governs arrogance and superiority complexes.
Within this army, it's also the attribute of Supreme Commander Heard Lauder.
Its tree… holds some exceedingly troublesome skills. Its affinity with Gula and Ira, that were made to inflict direct damage, is particularly bad.

On her first conversation with the Lord, her eyes sparkled greatly.
But at the same time, I felt it. This girl is in no way suitable for Leigie-sama.

The Demon Lord wasn't really thinking about anything. With eyes devoid of emotion, he uttered two words.

"… Yeah. Iyo."

"? What's『Iyo』?"

On those words, Leigie's expression turned stale.
His face spoke for itself. That explaining was a pain. He turned his eyes to me, but I decided to ignore him.
At first, I wondered what it was as well. I asked. But Leigie-sama never told me. In the end, I had to find it out by asking the other Demons. It truly was a waste of time.

Leigie-sama let out a deep sigh. As if he was saying this was all my fault.

And along with that sigh, Hiero's expression clouded.
With a heavy voice, Leigie-sama spoke. From my point of view, it was the same as normal, but for Hiero who was having her first conversation with him, it was probably different. His voice is always full of something that could be called despair.

"… What happened to the last one?"

"… Eh? Y-you mean oneechan?"

"… Yeah."

Yeah, he definitely doesn't know it.
Leigie-sama has no interest in the maid's name and origins. He probably found it a pain, so he answered as such.
Hiero's pride is stimulated, and she answers in a shaking voice.

"Oneechan was… burnt black by that Lize-san over there. That's why I'm…"

Demon Lord, you were there, weren't you! And isn't this your fault!?

Even though he was completely ignoring it, he can't even remember what happened just yesterday.
Are you sure there isn't any fungus growing inside of that head?

"I see… bring her here."

"… he? Leigie-sama, j-just now, what are…"

Leigie-sama frowned.
He's probably thinking, 'God, this is a pain,' but from someone who doesn't know him, he definitely looks displeased.
By the way, if Kanon-sama makes a face like that, it's a sign that the entire area will soon be reduced to cinders. There's no escape.
This Demon Lord is a wimp, so nothing like that ever happens here. I'll even bet my life on it. Ah, dammit. This is pissing me off.

Leigie-sama repeated himself.

"… Bring her."

"… Y-yes… ahaha, but she's just charcoal, right? … y-yes, I understand. I'll carry Oneechan here."

Hiero's eyes are teary, but she immediately leaves the room, making loud footsteps.

As if to shout out, 'I'm in a bad mood.'

But Leigie-sama probably doesn't notice that at all.
The Demon Lord under the covers, who usually never moved had taken such a large action, so I tried asking.

"What do you plan on doing?"

"… That one's no good."

"… Hiero, you mean?"

"Yeah…"

Without stating a specific reason, he just painstakingly said that one word.
… It seems that Lorna spoiling the heck out of him up until now has had a slight effect. It seems you guys really are the best under the heavens at deceiving people, Luxuria.
It's because she carried out each and every conceivable services for him… though that was also the reason I snapped.

With loud footsteps, Hiero slams open the door.
She violently throws something onto Leigie-sama's bed.

"… It's oneechan."

What Hiero brought was a Soul Core that could fit into the palm of your hand.
About half of it had burned away, and been destroyed. Looking at it, I myself cannot call that living. It's because I don't have the necessary tools to determine whether or not there's any life in that.

As long as a Demon's Soul Core is safe, they can take up long years to regenerate themselves. But with this much damage, it'll probably decay before any regeneration can happen.

I'm actually surprised Hiero was able to find this small fragment inside the ashes. Could it be she actually had soft feelings towards her sister?

Leigie-sama can't seem to contain his unhappiness as he takes the core in his hands.

He gave a sigh of resignation, and gave a word in Hiero's direction… once more, that word.

"… Iyo."

"… Eh? U-um… I deeply apologize. I am… s-still inexperienced, but I will do my best… would you be as kind as to tell me the meaning of『Iyo』?"

Having been pressed with an impossible trial, as if her smile before had been a lie, Hiero's tears fell all over the place.

Getting a pride to say they're inexperienced, what a frightening man. He probably isn't thinking about anything, though. But to one who governs Pride, that is a disgrace akin to death.

They are just masses of pride, and they think they're the centers of the world, so hurting their pride enough to get them to put themselves below others makes them absurdly weak.

"… Hah…"

"!? D-demon Lord…"

Who the hell does he think he's supposed to be?

With a sigh, Leigie-sama closed his eyes.

In the first place, 'I'll leave it to you', and 'I'm satisfied with your work' aren't specific instructions in the slightest, aren't they?

Right now, the Demon Lord doesn't really wish for anything. Can't he just tell her that?

Hiero nervously looks around the room. Her eyes met mine, but I hated her, so I ignored her.

Trying to regain her standing, she musters up her courage to talk again. I doubt any evaluation of her has risen or fallen in the first place. In the first place, there's no meaning in getting evaluated by that Leigie-sama.

I'm starting to think this, but don't Pride and Sloth have the worst compatibility?

One strives to be superior and worshipped by others, the other really doesn't care. You can't fulfill a superiority complex with the Lazy King.

Even if there were rules, I think Lorna's made a complete mistake when choosing her successor. Is this supposed to be some form of harassment?

"U-um… I specialize in housework! Cooking, and cleaning, and laundry… I'm confident in it. If you wish for it… e-even sexual favors…"

"I see."

Her face is red, and she's definitely pushing herself, but Leigie simply gives his usual answer.

No, he's not being cold. That's just how he is!
But Hiero doesn't know that. You can't try and communicate with this Demon Lord.
Unless you know what he is from the start… that's why I'm so troubled.

And having been pushed into a corner, Hiero continued to speak.

"Um… if it pleases you, please give me an order."

Having heard that, for the first time, Leigie-sama voiced his will.

"…… Damn, this is a pain."

"… Eh!?"

Seriously, who is he supposed to be?
Leigie-sama let out the deepest sigh he'd ever made.
Hiero looked at the Demon Lord with a blank expression. She hasn't said anything wrong. She hasn't made any reckless remarks, and she hasn't asserted her selfishness.
Having seen this scene, a hundred out of a hundred would side with her on the matter. Even I would.
Don't expect the maid that was just hired today to be able to figure everything out.

The Demon Lord casually lifted the broken Soul Core up to the light.

I wonder what's going through his mind.
And the moment came.
The presence that sprung forth all of a sudden made me choke for air.

Having sensed that, the face Hiero had finally put in order was suddenly overcome with fear, and after some convulsions, she took a large step back.

Pride forgot her pride, and wrath forgot her wrath. It was an amount of magic great enough to make my『Rage Flame』seem like child's play, enough magic to warp the world.
It was. Without a doubt, a wave of the strongest power I'd ever seen in my life.

Nothing seemed to matter anymore, and power seemed to seep out of my body due to the concentration of Acedia.
With a face on the brink of death, the Demon Lord chanted. It was definitely some sort of Spell.

"『Ir Ir Rul Arcadia. Everything, degradation and depravity. Hah… Law of money, the black cornerstone that holds together all creation, just gather for a bit in my name. 『Sloth Minugrosz』』 Ah, I misspelled it…"

"Wai…"

The overflowing magic abides the Demon Lord's chant, and takes form.
In general, Skills can be activated by incantation, or skill name. Without the incantation, the difficulty increases, and the output drops.
This Demon Lord's never chanted, or even said the skill name before, so with an aria that long, of the skills I've seen before… It'll most definitely be the highest ranking one.
I haven't the slightest idea what's going to happen, but an unpleasant feeling comes

over my body. An alarm clock goes off in my head.
The skill activation that's usually impossible to sense is crystal clear.
At the feeling of the world's order being warped, Hiero let out a scream.

But a spelling error… it was definitely that sigh he threw into it, wasn't it!?
He can't even recite a Skill properly, this Demon Lord!
The thoughts racing around my head were just my attempt to escape reality.
Even if the chant was a failure, the skill definitely activated.

All apart. Though nothing had changed, I felt something breaking.

The Soul Core the Demon King was holding began to change shape at the half that had been burned.
With the crystal at the center, a mysterious black haze started to gather, and take form. Its color changes.
Hiero mutters in a daze.

"O nee… chan?"

"… Haa."

His sigh was filled with annoyance while, as if a clip was being played in reverse, the charcoal regains its color, and a completely scorched face is dyed white and regains its gloss. In the wide open eyesockets, large orbs take shape.

In just a few seconds, a completely unharmed Lorna was created. Of course, her body, but even the clothes she had been wearing are reborn without a scratch.
In a situation that had long transcended expectations, Hiero's eyes are dilated as she raises a scream. Her back hits the bedside table, and her hips are shaking, but she retreats further.
And Lorna slowly opens her eyes.

… She's alive.
The hell… just what is that skill?
Regeneration? Like hell… as if regeneration can restore clothing. In the first place, Lorna should have been completely terminated. From a half-destroyed Soul Core, there's no way she'd be brought back this perfectly!

"Onee… chan?"

"Hie… ro?"

Hiero unsteadily walks towards Lorna, as if she had seen a ghost.
Lorna's eyes bink multiple times as she looks at her sister. She doesn't seem to know what's going on either.
Well, that can't be helped. Even I, who's seen this start to finish, can't understand what just happened.

At that moment, the color of Hiero's face changed. From ghastly pale, to red panic.
She tilts her head as she looks over Lorna's body.
I also noticed it. The regeneration… wasn't over yet. No, the wounds were already gone, but still, her time was turning back.

The skill hadn't ended yet!

The feeling that something was broken persisted, and even though she had returned to normal, there's no sign of it ending.

Lorna's height ever-so-slightly reduced, and her breasts withered in a similar manner. The look on her face gets slightly more childish.
Her clothing changes from a pure-white maid uniform to a smaller one with black as the base. Her long skirt changes to the shorter one Hiero was wearing.

By misspell, could he possibly…

My heart beats faster, as I see her body gradually shrink, the fifteen centimeter height difference between her and Hiero became ten, then five. Compared to that, the bulge in her breasts doesn't change all that much, but her facial features slowly regress from mature to innocent.
For a different reason, Hiero blinked her eyes as she turned to Leigie-sama.

"…Leigie-sama, this is…"

"… Turned her too far back."

With a face that showed he wasn't repenting at all, Leigie-sama rubbed his head into the pillow. Even though it was his mistake, he still has absolutely no motivation.

Turned her… too far back?

Lorna's transformation ends.
By that time, there was pretty much no gap between her and Hiero. Of course, there's personality, and Lorna's face looks just a little more adult-like, but the appearance differences they had before, if you exclude the fact that Lorna's a very slight bit taller, and her breasts much larger, as if they were twins, they looked identical. The difference left was that of Lust and Pride… the difference caused by attribute.
Lorna's perplexed eyes looked over her shorter arms and legs.
Perhaps Hiero didn't know how to respond, but she looked around as if to throw responsibility off of herself. I want someone to help me.

Only Leigie-same is without confusion, without ill will. He looks at the much-compacted, reconstructed Lorna.

"Do you have… memories? Today's date?"

On Leigie-sama's question, Lorna casts away her hesitation, and corrects her posture. As if concerned about her now-shorter skirt, she fidgets as she gives a clear reply.

"Eh? Ah… yes. Today is Divine Year 271C8A, Kanon Year 310 November 11th, Leigie-sama."

As his question was answered with a full-on smile, Leigie-sama turned to me.
Could it be that even though he asked, he doesn't even know the date himself?
Having regained composure, Hiero answers instead.

"Oneechan, it's the 12th."

"Heh? No, today should be the 11th… Hmm? Hiero, did you get taller?"

No, you shrunk.
Leigie-sama addressed Lorna, who was tilting her head, and still without a grasp on the situation, with a care-free tone.

"I see. Got it. Iyo."

"??? Y-yes! Understood, my liege…"

Her head remains tilted as she answers. She looks at her wristwatch, and compares it to the one on the wall. In a panic, she lowers her head deeply to Leigie-sama.

"Leigie-sama, I deeply apologize. A little… your meal time will be delayed by about an hour."

"Iyo."

"Thank you. I am deeply grateful for your kindness."

She instantly returned to her daily cycle, and made quiet steps as she exited the room. Behind her, she pulled the hand of her sister, who still didn't have a grasp on anything.

As I looked upon it, I was so taken aback that I couldn't say anything.
What's with that pointless loyalty? More than her own body, that had disintegrated, she worries for the mealtime of the Demon Lord that can go centuries without food or drink?
I look towards Leigie, the culprit in all of this, but there's no sign of him feeling satisfaction, or a sense of achievement, or even remorse.
This Demon Lord, who is he, really…

With all that's happened, I've lost confidence in my own『Wrath』that I'm supposed to govern.

Part 4: Quit. Screwing. With. Me!

Give me a break already.
Every time he shows one of his Sloth skills, my stress build up.

What I understand is that this Demon Lord has advanced enough to be appropriate for Rank Three. That's about it.
And while I originally would be happy upon learning such a fact, every time I'm reminded of it, I lose confidence in myself as a Demon.
Just how much do I have to satisfy my Sin to get some bullshit skill like the ability to rewind time? To be more specific, it seems it separates stored up experience, and rewinds the body, but that doesn't really matter.
Compared to Wrath, which is all direct attacks, Sloth is too free, and the effects are indeterminate, or how should I put it… they're really annoying.
He rarely uses them, so the damage when he does is horrendous. He's definitely trying to piss me off. It's a conspiracy.

This workplace is dangerous… my stomach hurts.
I can now understand why my Sloth predecessor abandoned all responsibility. When

a Sloth Demon gave up on this, there's no way a Wrath like me can endure it.
No matter how much I try venting my anger on him, he remains peaceful, so my stress isn't going anywhere at all.
Kanon-sama's expectations, and the environment itself have me stuck between a rock and a hard place.

But if I just let him be, then there's no workplace more peaceful than this one.
I mean, even if I don't observe him, in the end, he definitely won't do something as troublesome as a revolt, and even if we don't lend him power, it'll work out one way or another.

Is what I thought, but just look at this!
I hold my aching stomach as I turn to Leigie-sama who was slouching deeply into a chair.

"What? What did you just say?"

"… Nothing."

He's quite clearly making a face that says repeating would be a pain, as he averts his eyes. For me to almost completely understand this mostly expressionless King, is that some sort of growth on my part? I don't need this sort of growth…
It's no good… there's nothing we can do about this one.
I take deep breathes to control my anger. My control has greatly increased compared to when I first came here. Without a doubt.
I need to control my anger… even shouting at this man is more than he deserves.

"… Do you remember that Imperial decree?"

"…"

Don't… don't close your eyes. I'm begging you, listen…
It's… it's fine… calm down… if I get angry, it's my loss…
I take deep breathes, and leisurely lower my voice to make it easier for Leigie-sama to hear.

"I said it, didn't I? This time… the enemy's a Demon Lord."

"… No?"

Ku… this man…
I firmly clench my fist. I squeeze so hard my nails break through the skin, and a hot pain runs up my arm.
Is he making fun of me? No. Without even playing dumb, the memory's already completely gone.
I… said it! I definitely said it! I was the one who brought the order from Kanon, I was the one who painstakingly explained it to Leigie-sama, and the one who said that the opponent was a powerful Demon Lord so if he didn't go out himself, he would be sending his Generals to die a pointless death was also me!
It's because if I didn't warn him, I was sure he would never go out!

Anger splits my head, and as I felt that I was about to destroy the area, I somehow kept it contained with repeated abdominal breathing.

“Hey, hey, oneechan. Lize-san sure has become quiet lately.”

“Don’t mind her, just hold the end properly!”

AAAAAARRRRRRRRGGGGGGHHHHHHH!
Next to Leigie-sama, the annoying sisters spoke as if it were someone else’s problem.

Hiero’s master later learned of her unsightly display, and sent her in for maid training. Recently, those two have taken to coming here together.
The prideful younger sister, who intentionally raised her voice so I could hear, and the older one, who despite being one-sidedly killed by me, continued to show absolutely no interest towards me. By that devastating combo, my stress is swelling up twice as fast as before. This really is the worst.

Pride’s Skiltree’s nature lies in bestowing absolute adjustments to opponents they’ve Overruled.
To put it simply, to them, to those weaker than them, they display absolute strength, and to those that excel even a little bit more than them, they display complete weakness… that sort of skill.
And so, now that the older sister Lorna’s revived, it seems that Hiero was once more forced to occupy second place. Normally, once someone’s been Overruled, it’s difficult to overturn that, but now that Lorna’s been reduced to around the same age, the clear disparity in their appearances (mainly in the chest area) beat down Hiero once more, and while she’s still a bit afraid of Leigie-sama, she obediently follows her sister’s words.
Well, for now, that doesn’t really matter.

The problem is that Hiero is taking mischievous glances at me as if she had set up a prank while she practices making the bed.
She speaks in my direction as she makes an annoying smile.

“Lize-san, you’re not getting angry anymore… could it be you’ve finally given up after witnessing Leigie-sama’s power?”

“An inevitable result. No matter the case, laying hands on a Demon Lord… it was her previous behavior that was the stranger one!”

AAAAAARRRRRRRGGGGGGHHHH!
Rage so large I felt my head would explode at any moment swelled up, fueling my power.
Blood flows from the palm of my hand, and it trickles onto the ground.
I unintentionally put in too much power, and cracks are spreading across it.

I use up all of my mental fortitude fighting my own emotions.
Calm… calm down. Lize Bloodcross.
In the end, this is the nonsense of a child…

Compared to this man, who never moves by himself, despite being a Lord…
Smile. Make a smile.

“D-Dem on Lord? I-I said it, right? The opponent is… the Devouring Demon Lord.”

“… Who’s that?”

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGHHHH
Someone do something about this maaaaaaaaaan!

Among Kanon-sama's subordinates, there isn't one who doesn't know of Zebul Glaucus, the Devourer.
But this Demon Lord probably, in all honesty, doesn't know. Hooray.
That's why. I. Explained it. Because I thought he didn't know, I explained it! I definitely did!

AAAAAAAH, please save me, Kanon-samaaaaaaaaaa!

I hit my head against the bed post in an attempt to forget my anger, and Lorna looked at me with repulsed eyes.
This is all your Lord's fauuuuulllt!

"… Fifth… The Fifth Rank, a Demon that governs Gula, my liege. He subjugated the Fifteenth Rank, and the Sixteenth rank Demon Lords in a matter of three days. An atrocious… Demon Lord."

"… Is that supposed to be amazing?"

"Gu… Yes, it's amazing! Listen here, Rank Five means that among the Demon Lords loyal to Kanon-sama, he's the fifth strongest!"

"… Is he stronger than you?"

Nuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu!
General class… and a Demon Lord. Don't compare them!
I shed tears of restraint as I answer. Damn, why must I go through something like this?

"W-well… that's right…"

"… I see."

His uninterested line finally made me snap.
IF YOU DON'T EVEN CARE, THEN DON'T ASK!
AAAARRRRRGGGGGGHHHH!

"Wow, that's amazing… Lize-san. After going through this much, you can still keep quiet…"

"Naturally. In the first place, what was strange was the way Lize has been treating our Demon Lord up until now."

In my head, how many hundreds of thousands of times have I killed him so far!?
AAAAAAAAAAHHHH. This is bad… I'll die.
Even within my rage, tears started flowing out. Why am I…

"Uku… and. So. It. Would. Be. Bad. If You. Don't. Go. Out. Demon Lord! In. The. Worst. Case. They'll. Be. Annihilated!"

In the first place, having a Demon Lord confront a Demon Lord is common sense in battles between Demons.
This time, we even know beforehand that Zebul is personally leading his army.

A normal Demon Lord should know the meaning of this without me having to spell it out. But I thought Leigie-sama didn't know, so I already explained it to him!
Give me back all of my hard work!

Having listened to the drawn out conversation, Leigie-sama yawned with sleepy eyes.

"… Iyo."

"If the army the Great Demon King sent you is annihilated, you'll definitely be punished, you know!? Do you understand that!?"

But seeing her behavior, I'm not sure about other Lords, but perhaps Kanon-sama will let this man off.
But of course, I won't say that. If I did, he definitely wouldn't go out.

Why is it that the man in question isn't even thinking anything, when I, who was merely sent to watch over him, have so much on my mind!!

"…"

Are. You. A Child!!?
I pull at his arm as he silently closes his eyes.
From Lorna, I heard that Deije and Medea had launched an attack, and it's been a few hours since we informed Leigie-sama.
If we don't hurry, they'll all die. No, it's not strange it they've already perished.
And wait, normally, shouldn't he at least say something!? That he wanted to join them or something!?

With Leigie-sama showing no signs of movement, and I was just about to give up, my savior popped up from an unexpected place.
With eyes full of curiosity, Hiero pulled at Leigie-sama.

"Leigie-sama, I want to see it! The place where they're fighting!"

Nono, that wasn't my intent, you know?
Hiero has even less restraint than me when dealing with this Demon Lord. Of all things, she climbed onto his knee, and started shaking his shoulders back and forth.
Due to the younger sister's sudden recklessness, the elder one quickly tried to apprehend her. Unfortunately, due to her years of training being blown away, she lacks the physical ability to pull her away.

"Hey, stop that! What do you think you're doing to Leigie-sama…"

"Eh? No, but even oneechan wants to see the form of a Demon Lord fighting once in your life, right?"

"Yes, well…"

On the younger's direct question, Lorna hesitated for a second.
Despite this and that, Lorna who serves a Demon Lord who doesn't do anything must harbor those feelings. That's a bit of a relief.
As if he had noticed a change in the behavior of the faithful maid he had rewound the time of, Leigie-sama opened his eyes, and said a word.
It really was just a word. It seems he's finally started to remember the name lately.

"Lorna."

"Hiero, look! Leigie-sama is tired. Stop troubling him, and come back here so we can be doing what we should!"

Lorna spilled out her opinion without restraint. She grabs Hiero's body firmly with both arms, and pulls her off of Leigie-sama.
Even while pulling her off, she continues to direct a charming smile at Leigie-sama before deeply lowering her head.
But without a hint of interest towards her smile, he closed his eyes.
Inside of Lorna's arms, Hiero resists, and shouts out.

"B-but oneechan! Every night, to Leigie-sama, don't you mastur…!"

… What?

Upon hearing that, with movements unbefitting of Lust, Lorna locked Hiero's face in an iron claw with speed that made me question whether she had used a skill or not.
She looks over her sister expressionlessly. Her eyes definitely aren't laughing. That's the expression of someone considering how to cook up the live fish sitting on the cutting board.
Just what would happen if you break her usual calm temperament? It feels as if a sleeping beast had been awoken.

"Hiero… if you say any more, fufu… you may earn some of my resentment…"

"Hii!? Ha… hahi!!"

And suddenly, there was a girl directing serious killing intent at her younger sister.
Hiero noticed she had stepped onto the beast's tail, and nods obediently with a pale face.

Lorna's face slowly turns red, as she turns to her lord, but as he's already taken up a sleeping position, there's no way he was listening. In the first place, even if he was, I doubt he would even stop to think about it.

But… I see. So that's it… Luxuria. A Lewd elder sister… that's what Hiero was trying to say.

Seeing Leigie-sama's behavior, Lorna put her hand to her chest in relief.
For once in a long time, I smiled from the bottom of my heart.

… But don't forget that Leigie-sama isn't the only one here. Don't forget me.

I lightly tap Lorna's shoulder.
She turns around, and noticing my smile, she turns pale.
Inside of her hand, Hiero's frothing at the mouth as she loses consciousness.

"Li… Lize?"

I completely ignore Lorna's pleading eyes, and casually bring up some idle chatter.

"So that's it… to think that under that diligent face, you were… should I say, as expected of Luxeria?"

"Wha…!?"

"I did find it odd when I first heard you governed Lust, but I never thought that of all things, you would use the lord you served to…"

"Wait, wait, wait, time out!"

With an expression I've never seen on her before, she grabs my collar, and pulls me closer.
Even if she looks a bit more innocent, being exposed to her beautiful face point blank, even though I'm of the same gender, I can't stop the beating of my heart.
Ku ku ku Lust… lust… is it?
With teary eyes, she turns her face away.
What should I do. I'm having a lot of fun.

"Even if you may be a Demon of Lust, are you not a little too sinful? Did you wanted to look stoic, while you advanced your Luxuria class inside your heart… as expected of the girl her own sister called lewd. What's more, every day… aren't you going to become a Demon Lord of Lust sometime soon?"

"Wait, that's wrong! Lize! It's not like that! Right, it's Hiero's misunderstanding!"

She shakes me violently.
Just what sort of persuasive power do you think you have when your face is that red, and your eyes so teary?
In the first place, whether that be fantasy or reality, it doesn't really matter to me.

"And I doubt you even have to be so secretive about it, like Hiero, why don't you just tell Leigie? To instruct you to do sexual favors or something, that you'd happily accept. Ku ku ku, I think even Leigie-sama'll be surprised. That the Lorna that always did the cooking and cleaning was actually thinking such things deep down."

"…!!"

She raises a scream without any words as I thrust the final blow.
You won't get any pity. I put my hand to her face that's become as red as an apple.

"Ah, if it's hard to say, then do you want me to tell him for you? As an apology for killing you that one time? Fufu, Leigie-sama sure is a happy Demon Lord. For a Luxeria Demon to think of him to that extent, and even give her first to him."

"Huu… Uu… wrong, it's not like… I'm…"

She's lost and confused as she falls to the ground.
By the way, despite all the noise we're making, Leigie-sama isn't stirring in the slightest.
As she made a face as if the world was going to end, I lightly tapped her shoulder. At this rate, I'm really going to awaken to something besides Wrath.

"Hey, Lorna. How about a trade?"

"A… Trade…?"

With eyes like an abandoned puppy, she spoke as she looked up at me.
I have things I have to do, and Lorna has things she has to do. In order to fulfill

both, why don't we help each other a bit? Ku ku ku, this is mutual aid, isn't it?

"Yes… Lorna. I want… to see Leigie-sama's form in battle. Maybe if I saw the moment Leigie took down Zebul, I would completely forget everything that came to pass here."

"Gu… uu.. you Demon."

What are you saying, this late in the game.
Even when I gave her hope at the last moment, Lorna continues to hesitate. She's a perfect image of loyalty. Though she is a lewd woman who does this and that with her Lord's image every night.

"Ah, if it's that, we can record his fighting form on a memory crystal, you know? Ku ku ku, won't it make for some good… material?"

"I-I get it! I get it, so p-please stop it!"

She raises the white flag.

As I thought, it's nice to win. I didn't even use my Wrath, but it's a refreshing feeling after so long.
Now the problem is whether or not Lorna can persuade that guy…
Could it be that's the greatest problem?

Lorna gently pulls the cuff of the sleeping Leigie-sama with restraint.

"Leigie-sama…"

"…"

Perhaps because that was the voice that always rung out for his meal time, amazingly, after only one call, Leigie-sama opened his eyes.
Lorna began negotiations with her face dyed a deep red.

"This may be presumptuous, but I have a small request…"

"Don't want to."

… He shows no mercy, even to the maid.
I guess that's right. Even when he had a revival spell, he's a man who didn't even use it until Hiero got to be a pain. There's no way the presence of Lorna will do anything.
But perhaps because she's even more used to dealing with Leigie, she doesn't pay any mind to his denial.

"Together with Lize… won't you bring ruin to the opposing Demon Lord, Zebul?"

"… Why?"

Why?
Why, you ask? Because it's an order from the Great Demon King!
I try to approach, but Lorna stops me.
She continued on with a kind look in her eyes.

"Leigie-sama, is there anything special you want to eat tonight?"

"… Curry rice."

"Then we'll have Curry Rice tonight. Leigie-sama, I'll put all my skill into making it. It will taste better if you excersize a bit first."

"… Unnecessary."

"Leigie-sama, how about dessert?"

"… Apple pie."

Are you a child?

"Then I'll bake Apple Pie. Leigie-sama, it will take a little bit of time, so how about you move your body a bit?"

"I hate it."

"Fighting, you mean?"

"I'm a pacifist."

And what the hell's with a pacifistic Demon Lord?

"That's quite amazing, Leigie-sama."

"Especially if the opponent's strong, I hate it even more. It's a pain."

"… Compared to you, my liege, their power amounts to nothing."

Nono, that isn't the case, right?
The opponent is Rank Five. Compared to that, Leigie-sama's become Rank Three quite recently.
It's undoubtable that he's above Zebul, but I have to say that it'll be difficult to win that easily. There's a problem of affinity, and I don't know the details of Sloth Skills.
Leigie-sama has a troubled face as he locks eyes with Lorna.

"… I see. Lorna… you want me to fight that badly?"

"… Yes."

"For whose sake?"

"… For my sake. Later… I'll bear witness. I'll have Lize… take pictures, so…"

"Bu…!"

I unintentionally laughed.
Lorna's face is the shade of a boiled octopus as she glares at me. Her eyes are telling me that she doesn't mean it like that, but from my point of view, it can be for nothing else.
I get it. I get it. I'll take them! Use them as material however you like.

"… I see…"

"… I'm very sorry."

"… Hah…"

"… I'm very sorry."

"… For some reason, my stomach hurts…"

With a face devoid of any pain, the Demon Lord spoke.
That much!? You don't want to fight that much!? Leigie of the Slaughterdolls!
If you're going to fake illness, at least give a pained face!

"… I truly am sorry, Leigie-sama."

In response, Lorna gave a truly apologetic face as she lowered her head.
Even after seeing that, he doesn't seem to think anything. He turned away, and curled up into a ball.
This is definitely impossible…

"… Now, Lize. Leigie-sama has given affirmation."

"… Eh!? Fo realz!?"

With that? That was enough?
Is that really fine? No matter how you look at it, he was refusing, but…

Within the chair, the Demon Lord tried to shrink his body. I was right to try asking in the time his bed was being made. If he was on the bed, he would have burrowed under the covers without a doubt.
Lorna continued to say some unbelievable things.

"… Lize, please take Leigie-sama. Even if you can do nothing else, then at the very least, you can do that, right?"

… Even if I can't do anything? That's quite rude. Just how much trouble do you think I'm going through…
But that's fine. That's still fine. The problem is… will he even go?

"… Eh? Should I take him on my back?"

"… You will be moving my liege. That much is obvious."

What's obvious? … Move already!
In the first place, the Castle of Shadows is the center of the large mass of land given to him. I understand the general distance to its borders, but I'm going to have to carry him that far…?
I don't want to think about it. Even if I have enough strength, is the Demon Lord's pride really intact after being carried by a woman shorter than him?

… It probably is.

I swallow the rage that began to boil up. I don't really understand why I have to do so much, but it'll take time. Flying dragons are the main forms of transport within the Demon World.
So this time as well, even if I'm carrying him, it'll only be to the Dragon Stables.

"… I get it… I'll carry him, so…"

"That's fine. Now, Leigie-sama… I'm sorry, but…"

"… The truth is, if I'm away from the bed for more than an hour, I'll die."

At this point in time, he still knows not when to give up. He has not a scrap of pride.
And wait, don't lie with a straight face! There's no way this thing is a Demon Lord!
In the first place, it'll take longer than an hour to get there, even by Dragon.

"… Even if we use a flying dragon, it'll take more than an hour just to get there…"

"What? More than an hour… you say? You, are you trying to kill me!!?"

That was the most motivated voice I had heard from him from the moment I was stationed here.
Does he really hate it that much… this man.
A grinding pain comes from my stomach.

"Don't' screw with me! I'll give in and fight… that much is fine. Because it'll be over after I randomly use some skill or another. But if you want me to fight, then bring that something something Demon Lord to my room, or it ain't happening!"

"T-there's no way that's happening! Now let's go!"

I pull at the whining Demon Lord's arm with all my might.

"… Don't~ Want~ To~! I definitely won't work!"

"Don't be selfish! It's an order from the Great Demon King!"

"Damn, why must I go through this… Being a Demon Lord… I quit!"

This man… he's serious. He doesn't want to move that badly.
You're not even working in the first place!
And in a time like this, this Demon Lord still hasn't worked up any interest towards his enemy.

"… Now then, stop screwing around! You can sleep on the way there!"

With Wrath being my attribute, the only one who's made me make so many concessions is this man.

"… Can I sleep in battle too?"

Is his head screwed on right?

And wait, you'll die! No matter who you think you are, you'll die! Your enemy isn't General Class, he's a Demon Lord like you!
Does this man understand that!?

"… It's no good. Go tell Kanon. Go fight for yourself."

With eyes full of needless self-confidence, this man shows no fear even towards the Great Demon Lord.
If one of the Great Demon Lord's direct subordinates saw him now, it wouldn't be strange for him to get convicted for treason.

“There’s no way I could say something like that! And it’s not like it has to be dragons. I just thought that would be fastest. Now warp, or do some instantaneous movement, or whatever it is you want! You’re still fighting, you know! That’s your responsibility!

“…Hah…”

Leigie-sama lets out a sigh.
He really is useless.
And this conversation is a pain.
Is what his eyes are telling me.

When I thought he was about to return some more complaints, I felt a weightless feeling as if my body had been tossed into the air.
My field of vision instantly changed.

“He…?”

Having been thrown into the air himself, as well, Leigie-sama doesn’t try to roll or even raise his voice as he flops onto the ground.
I quickly correct my body, and land on my feet.
A desert of darkness without a single place to take cover extended to the horizon. The pale blue moon illuminated the desolate earth without a single blade of vegetation.

“Heh? Wai… wah… eh?”

Am I seeing an illusion?
I was definitely inside the castle so how did we…
in comparison to me at the height of confusion, the Demon Lord who had been thrown on the ground isn’t panicking at all.

The pitch black dirt that seemed to personify darkness itself, a sign that it was soaked in the Mana of death.

“… Zone… more, that way…”

“What? Wait…”

I heard an ominous voice.
My vision shifted once more.
From an empty plain, to a plain drenched in the scent of blood and flesh and ash.
Leigie-sama rolls on the ground in an unsightly manner.

When I hit the ground, my instincts perceived it.
Much different from Leigie-sama’s existence…but something as great as him. And wait, the object releasing it is right before my eyes.
As if a hole had been cut in space, an overcoat that seemed to suck in all light draped over a small shadow.
The small face covered in green hair looked over with an expression of bewilderment. But if you were to compare, I was the more confused of the two of us.

Zebul Glaucus.
The Devouring King. Her appearance and figure match the one I had heard about.

How can this be… am I dreaming!?

The Demon Lord ignores me, and turns to Leigie, who unsteadily lifts himself.”
In front of Zebul, with shaking steps like that of a baby fawn, he fell onto his back, and sighed.
Without letting his voice out, and moving only his mouth, he began to complain.

“… Really… impossible… no good. This one’s strong… don’t want to…I can’t hear anything lalalalala.”

The first thoughts that were born in my mind were retorts.
Wait, so that was you!
I definitely said you could teleport or something, and I’ll admit that.
Is this also a Sloth Skill? No, it’s perfect for Sloth, isn’t it!
Even so, he gives up quickly!

Leigie-sama takes a glance at Zebul, and swings his head from side to side.
My stomach instantly goes into ominous spasms of pain. Perhaps I’ll burn through my gut.

Anyways, Quit. Screwing. With. Me!

Leigie and Lorna by Shibaki Tsubura

Chapter 5: Gula's Gluttony

Part 1: This World is… Hell

Within the whole world, I think that the hardest feeling to bear is『Hunger』.
The Demon World is absurdly vast, by I doubt there exists a longing that surpasses this thirst.

Thus, after being given life as a Demon, when I was selected under Gula, I thought it to be a natural matter of course.

The months and years passed by favorably, and as I lived thinking of nothing but how to sate my hunger, the class I was burdened with had changed to『Demon Lord』when I wasn't looking.
If you ask whether anything changed once I became a Demon Lord, nothing changed at all. The only thing I am capable of is eating, and I was more than satisfied with that alone.
Perhaps a change to speak of was that I became one of the strong, and therefore, the extent of what I could eat had increased.

It was survival of the fittest in the truest sense of the word. Because we were a bit stronger, we ate, and as a result, our classes advanced.

It didn't take long for the target of that desire to shift from what the other Demons called 'Food', to inorganic matter, and finally those of the same race.
The fact that other Demons taste good is a sort of common sense among those that carry Gula. Eating them takes up too much effort, so there are few that actually do it is all… meaning as long as you take care of that single point, there is no need for hesitation.

I lived a long time.

I was born as a Demon, became a Demon Lord, became the Great Demon King's subordinate, and ate all the opposing Demon Lords.
The stronger the targets were, the better they tasted on my tongue.

Within Demons, there are about five ranks.

Meaning, starting from『Rankless』, it goes to

『Pawn』
『Knight』
『General』
『Lord』

These five.
Rankless have the least taste, and Lords are a delicacy.
Additionally, their taste changes based on the attribute they carry. If you asked me what the supreme food was, I would definitely say『Demons』.

To Gluttony, that is cursed with unlimited hunger, no matter how much food you have, it is never enough.
Born as pure predators, Gluttonies are never loved by their race. Because of their

nature that rashly excels in attack power, if they act too indiscriminately, there's always the fear that their surroundings will work to eliminate them.
Order was needed, so the quickest solution was to put them under the protections of someone of a high rank.
And that was the Great Demon Lord. That's all.
Without any real difficult reasons, and without any particular circumstances. For such simple reasons, I became a Demon who followed the Great Demon Lord, and I got retainers, and land, and… the right to devour Demons that opposed us.

Even more time passed.
My power as a Demon continued to rise, and my hunger along with it.
My tongue matured, and normal food would no longer sate my hunger in the slightest.

The Great Demon Lord changed generations thrice, and one who hadn't even existed when I was born, Kanon of Ruin, took over.
She was a deep crimson Demon, a beautiful personification of the flames of purgatory.
I still remember the audience I had with her when she took office.

The magic I felt from her body blazed up in a manner fitting of Ira, and the surrounding air seemed to burn with tremendous heat at the might that filled it. I felt that I was going to prostrate myself at any moment against that might.
I thought of how beautiful and strong a Devil she was.
And within her, was overflowing charisma.
If it's with this Great Demon King, then I'll be able to satisfy my hunger to levels I've never felt before.
I'll be able to taste flavors I've never learned of.

And at the same time, I thought.
If I could ever get a taste of her… the sensation would be good enough to send me to heaven.

My parents, and my friends, and my retainers even ate other Gluttonies.
They ate Sloth, and Greed, and Lust, and Wrath, and Gluttony, and Pride, and Envy.
In tears, in anger, in laughter, in gratitude, they were eaten.

There is no ranking among food, and thus, everything in this world has equal value.
Whether disgusting, or delicious, even if I knew it would never fill my stomach, I ate.

This world is… hell.

It expands. It contracts. It changes. War starts. War Ends. Things fall. Things revive. Everything is perpetually in a state of change, and what prospers must decay. But within all of that, the only thing that didn't change at all was my hunger.

Only hunger remained constant.

Along with the endless euphoria I experienced upon sating it.

So me raising a revolt against the Great Demon King, Kanon Iralaude was likely not a matter of food supplies or anything. It was probably just a matter of time.
Because I'm a Demon. A Demon of Gluttony.

Part 2: Let me Have a Taste

This level of Magic wasn't able to satisfy my Soul Core at all.

It was so nice back in the day. The Demon World was simply overflowing with powerful demons who had spent long years satisfying their desires.
Perhaps I've just lived too long. Perhaps I've just eaten too many tasty things. And within our limited resources, in order to satisfy our matured tongues, we continued to struggle like children.

Fufufu, it was so nice back in the day… is it? I'm starting to sound like an old person.

About ten thousand years ago, most of the powerful Demons… in a large scale war with the invading army from heaven, most of them perished.
What remains of the demons now. The Demon Lords are all youngsters who haven't ten thousand years under their belts.

"Zebul-zama, I'm hungry."

A Demon with a Wolf's head spoke.
He's General Class, and another who governs Gluttony. For someone who has yet to reach Demon Lord status, I more than understand his pain.

"Fufufufufu, of course… I'm the same. Endure it. The meal eaten after enduring the utmost limits of starvation is the greatest of bliss. They say hunger is the best seasoning, right?"

"Food… I wants… food."

The sweet scent of blood and flesh and souls tickles my nostrils.
While I may be called something like the Carrion Devourer, I'm a scholar on the journey for supreme tastes, and I don't just devour anything out there. I don't know where that name came about.
I cross my feet onto the pure white throne of marble. Muffled cries are coming from the mouth of the food carrying the throne.

For Demons of Pride… breaking their pride before eating them creates the greatest taste.
But whatever the case, I don't feel very much power from him anyways. I guess the taste will be reasonable, at least.

Of course, my stomach is endless, so I won't do something as foolish as wasting food. I never miss my prayers before and after a meal.
Blood spills out like a fountain, and stains my face. At the same time, the throne begins to sway.

"H-hey! Don't just eat them as you please!"

"Gu?"

When I frantically look underneath it, I saw the form of my subordinate gnawing on the head of another with his massive jaw.

Aaaaaah, right when I was in the middle of food preparations…
Even if the materials are bad, they don't understand my sentiment of making them as tasty as possible.
But raising a crunching sound, the smile that bust out on that wolf face made me feel it didn't matter anymore. It's because I can understand how he feels.
Good grief, what helpless children.
I jump off of the Throne, take the right arm of the corpse that had lost its freshness, and put it in my mouth.
The ripe soul only gave off a sweet taste for an instant. With a few chews, it disappeared in the blink of an eye.

Well, well, good grief. This doesn't do anything to my hunger.
When I was ripping off the left arm, the wolf head spoke.

"Gu… Zebul-zama… yo fazt…"

"Yeah, I'm… one who can eat a bit."

"Didn't you juzt eats a Demon Lord…"

"Yep, that was tasty."

As I thought, Demon Lords are different. The depth of flavor is different. The texture is different. I can clearly tell that my body is happy when I eat them.
Even if they're newcomers, the magic they possess is completely incomparable to the General Class below them.
The Wolf finishes up the head, but when it looked through its spoils for something more, the libs were already gone.
He directs accusatory yes at me.

"Unfair…"

Well, well.
The things kids say these days.
The endless longings he held in regards to food made me speak with admiration.

"Not unfair, not unfair. You have to take your own food… by yourself. The one who fought Claud Astal was me, right? It's natural that I be the one to eat him. Did you perhaps do anything?"

"Zat demon juzt now… I killed him…"

"… Really? Was that how it was? Fufufu, well, the achievements of the vassals are those of the King's correct? If you hate it… you've got to rise up in the world."

If you do, you'll someday come to learn the taste of a Demon Lord. Well, perhaps you'll live happier if you never learn it.

I activate a Gluttony Skill.
I use my magic, and my stomach shakes even further with hunger.

『Million Dish』

The tentacles that grew from my back pierce the body of the former Pride Demon that had already lost its head and limbs.

The wolf head raises a cry.

"Wait…"

"Fufufu, well, I'll leave you a bit."

Gluttony skills are used only during meals.
Each tentacle moves individually, and the Pride Demon's body was eaten up in under a second.
The wolf head hurriedly tried to bite at it, but his teeth clicked together fruitlessly in the empty air.
Fufufu… to intrude on another's meal, what bad eating manners, kid.

"Aaaaaaaah, you zaid you would… leave a bit…"

"Fufufu… thank you for the meal… it tasted decent."

Even if he's General-class, I guess that's all he's got. As I thought, back in the day…
No, that was only the Fifteenth Rank Demon Lord. The Demons he's amassed are just that level.

"… Zebul-zama…"

"Fufu, see, I left it, did I not?"

The teary-eyed wolf… he's a General Class Demon belonging to my army, Gar Luxeed. I pointed to the pure-white throne, and offered it to him.

"… The throne."

"I don't… needs a plate."

Good grief, as a General Class, he lacks dignity… shouldn't higher class Demons have a bit more elegance?
Ahaha, well, wolves are carnivorous, was it? That is… I've done something bad.
But you shouldn't be so picky with food.

"I see… fufu, then I guess I'll eat it…"

"… Edible thingz are edible."

"When it comes down to it, sometimes you have to get down and eat the dirt and stones as well."

The mouth on the hand I pointed with… the fangs shaved at the marble.
It's not a bad taste. But even if it's made with high quality materials, in the end, it's just a plate. It's fine for fooling my hunger, but as I thought, it can't rival what's supposed to be on the plate.

The wat's long since finished, and this is the victory banquet.

The army of Pride has fallen, and all the enemy soldiers became food.
They definitely weren't a match for me at all. Despite having their Demon Lord with them, in just two hours, their defeat was already decided.
Our army only contains Gluttony Demons, but Gluttony excels in attack power, and

the most basic of Gluttony Skills, 『Wave of Starvation』 is one with a large area of effect.
As long as I'm here, all Demons below a certain level of ability simply get caught up in the skill, and end up as nothing but food.
Of course, I did make sure to hold back, but they were an indecisive bunch from the start.

Fufufu, there's no meaning in an indecisive Superbia Demon. In the end, he's just a loser who submitted himself to Kanon Iralaude.
Pride is… stronger the more arrogance one has. And that also increases the flavor.
There's also the fact that the difference in rank between us was too great, but the 『Overrule』 the Demon Lord used wasn't anything special either.
His screams of despair weren't bad as a seasoning, though.

Having finished eating the throne, I pat my stomach.
I'm quite slim. All the nutrition goes to feeding my Gluttony Skills.

"Zebul-zama… I'm hungry."

"Hmm? Already? … I guess it's because there was just quantity without quality…"

With this, I've barely broken even with what was used up by my skills.
I scan the surroundings, but everything I could gnaw on had disappeared into someone's stomach or another, and all I saw were eyes sparkling with hunger.
Well, well, regular eating should give a better feeling of fullness, but… well, there's no helping it if they can't endure it.
Since I just ate a Demon Lord, I can still hold on for a while, but answering to the expectations of his men is also a King's duty, is it not?
I hit the palms of my hands together, and addressed the faces of my men, who were seething in their basic desires.

"Now, let's go search for some more food…"

"YEEEEEEEEEEEAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH!!"

My subordinates cry out. The ground shakes under their hunger, and the cries of beasts ring through the air.
They have more than enough motivation. A majority of my gluttonous followers have the forms of beast. For them, who have not the power to bite through everything, it's a form they've taken on to at least be able to eat chew through some hard things.

And so, my army's members… aren't that good at using their heads. Well, to do nothing but eat, there really isn't the need.
Among them, the one who's actually known as quite a resourceful General, Gar, has drool dripping from his mouth as he unfurls a map.

The Great Demon King's Castle, the Palace of Rending Flames is surrounded by other Demon Lords' territories, and it doesn't look like we'll be able to reach it so easily.
So before eating Kanon-sama, having the other Demon Lords as appetizers as we continue towards the Palace is a wonderful plan if I do say so myself.
Fufufu, even I… taking on multiple Demon Lords at once will be difficult. Let's just go around eating them in order.
As long as the Great Demon King goes into my stomach, my abilities should rise further. I could even be the King in her place.

It's because the Demon Lords are all overflowing with ambition. No one will care about a King who was weak enough to get eaten.

On the route Gar pointed to, was a territory divided by a line.
A vast land along the path with the shortest distance to the Great Demon King. Its width was such that adding together the land of the Demon Lords I ate yesterday and today wasn't nearly enough. An expanse that would take more than a day to cross, even on a Flying Dragon. If we wanted to avoid this land, we'll have to take on quite a detour.
Upon seeing the name marked on it, I knit my brow.

"Oh my… what a navigation error. Why is it that with almost twenty Demon Lords out there, this guy's name has to pop up?"

"Hmm? Iz there a problem?"

"A big one. BIG ONE. For god's sake, what was Mizna and the others thinking when they thought up this route…"

"Zebul-zama… Mizna isn't here anymore. Setter and Grad as well."

"No, I know. They were tasty."

I understand, but, you know, I want to offer a word of complaint or two.

I remember the three Kanon-sama dispatched to keep watch over me.
My own men are of no help in planning, so my invasion plans were skillfully drawn up by those three. Of course, I wasn't honest enough to tell them it was all to eat Kanon-sama.
All they thought up was the route. Naturally, as they were under the direct control of Kanon-sama, they would only be in the way after that, so once they had drafted a plan, they became my dinner's appetizer.
In the end, a General Class, taken by surprise at that, is no match for me.
Well, I did savor the taste. The fact that they were much tastier than the generals of that Pride army must be a difference in basic quality.

But still, for it to have come to this…
For once in a long time, an emotion other than hunger floated up. I touched the name on the map.
Honestly… I really don't feel up for this one.

"Waz the problem?"

"… You, could it be you don't know of the Demon Lord of Acedia, Leigie of the Slaughterdolls?"

Former Rank Four. After some recent achievements, he's been promoted to Rank Three; a high ranking Demon Lord of Sloth.
It's not like a Demon Lord's strength can be determined solely by ranking, and it's not like I'm that afraid of his strength. He isn't some newcomer, like me, he's an old age Demon Lord who survived the Heavenly War ten thousand years ago. But that isn't very scary to me.
Of course, I've never fought him, but the fact that he's clung to life for this long also means that he's stored up just that much power. Thus, it's completely true that he

won't be as easy as those Rank Fifteen and Rank Sixteen Lords, but the essence of the problem lies elsewhere entirely.
I let out a deep sigh.

And to my cute subordinates, who didn't understand anything, I delivered the shocking truth.

"Demons of Sloth are… bitter, aren't they?"

"Bitter…?"

"Yeah, I always honor whoever I beat by eating them whatever they may be, however… even for me, I don't want to eat a Demon of Sloth."

"Eeeeeeeeeh?"

Gar jumps up in a gesture of surprise.
You're overreacting… I think as I survey the surroundings, only to find my subordinates, who never think of anything besides eating, and never display a fragment of intelligence staring as if they had just seen something unbelievable.
Nononono.

I tried to give a simple explanation. This is the knowledge of Gluttony.

"No, it's not, well… the lower level Demons are fine, you see. But the more they carry their Sloth to the extremes, the ways through which they can carry it out increases… Within them, in order to prevent getting eaten, there's this skill that drops the flavor of their meat and soul, so…"

That's dangerous.

It's an individual skill, and quite a High Ranking one, but it's a terrifying expression of flavor.
That taste is, in itself bitter enough to give permanent mental trauma with just one bite. It's not on a level where some people who like bitter foods can partake in it. It's not a matter of like, or dislike. It's just plain bad.
Even for someone called the Devourer, in eating, I only want to eat the best of foods, and from one who's even eaten all sorts of poisons to try and fill my endless stomach… it's bad. It's terrible enough to kill. It was the first, and only thing in my life to ever give me a stomachache.
Then there's always the option of swallowing whole, you may think, but that's wrong. Their taste resounds in their very souls. Even if you send it directly to your stomach, it's without a doubt terrible.

To change taste as not to be eaten, it's like an attribute of a fruit.

"Lower level Sloth… has a nice affinity, and they don't move, so they're easy to hunt, and their flavor is unique, but not bad…but it has to be a Demon Lord of all things."

"Meaning?"

In a beat, I put power into my words, and declare.

"The worst tasting thing in this world. There's no question about it."

"Ooooooooooh."

I'm not sure what they're misunderstanding, but they've started clapping.
… You guys, you don't get it at all. I guess that's true. Gluttony's outlook on food is excessively open minded… so not being tasty is one thing, but I'll bet they've never tasted the true meaning of Terrible.
I cannot help but bless them for their good fortune. Among my thousands of years of life, it's a trauma that goes directly in my top three.

Well, you don't often get a chance to eat a Sloth Demon, and once they go above General Class, they appear on the battlefield less and less, so I'll bet we won't meet any.
… Hmm?

"… I see… You anticipated that he wouldn't come out. Mizna…"

"Hm?"

I see. If you put it like that, then I understand.
Truly, a Demon Lord of Sloth personally participating is impossible.
If you ask why, unlike Gluttony, their cravings do not require them to harm others, and the Demon Lord of Sloth should be the laziest existence within the entire Demon World.
There's no way he would join in something as troublesome as a war. Even if the Great Demon King ordered it, it's impossible.

I tried looking through my memory for Leigie's face, but I couldn't bring it up.
Having served under the reigns of three different Great Demon Kings, I should be the oldest veteran within Kanon-sama's army, but no matter how far I probe my memory, I cannot picture the image of Leigie of the Slaughterdolls.

I frowned, as I concentrated nutrients to my brain. And I was finally able to pull out a memory.
It's definitely faint, but I remember.

He was definitely there during the festival in which Great Demon King Kanon-sama took office. Being pulled around by his inspector.
He had black hair, and an unreliable slim figure. How the hell is that guy a… I remember the other Demon Lords saying such things.

"Whatz wrong? Zebel-zama…"

"… Wait a second. Huh? I think he was there for the previous King Ferris Craun as well…"

My memory traces even further back.
The festival when the previous Demon Lord was instated.
My memory is hazy, and everything looks covered up by mist, but he was definitely there.
A black haired, and sloppy-looking man, carried on the back of his subordinate. How the hell is that guy a… I remember the other Demon Lords saying that. Just barely.

I tilt my head.

"… Huh? Hang on, just how long has he been there… Ferris Craun was in office for quite a while, wasn't he…"

Ferris was inaugurated as the Great Demon King more than twenty thousand years ago.
Even I can't remember the Great Demon King before that, but when I first became a Demon Lord, was that man there? Wasn't he?
A Demon's lifespan is exceedingly long, but for him to live this long, he must have considerable power.
I think he wasn't there that long ago, but I don't have too much confidence in it.
Probably because whether he was there or not wouldn't change anything…

"Zebul-zama, what shoulds we do?"

"Hmm… Even if you ask me that. Since we've come all the way here, we have no choice but to go for it."

We've already burned our bridges on the way here, so it all depends on how fast we can take down Kanon-sama.
Taking a roundabout way is… unfavorable. We'll have to head forward with determination and resolve.

Luckily, Sloth is said to excel in durability. It has an exceedingly good affinity with Gluttony. As long as I can endure the taste.
No, for taste… it's been a really long time since I last ate a higher rank Sloth. My memory is vague, and it could be that only the impact remained in it, and if I try eating one now, it won't actually be so bad.

Yeah. That's right. The past aside, there no way the current me can eat something and be repulsed by it.

What's more, there's no way that Sloth will actually come out. If they offer any resistance, it'll be the Sloth's army at most. Leigie's army is definitely known to be powerful, but at most, they're full of Generals. No match for me.
On the contrary, I can't wait to taste them.

"Okay, then we'll go on a direct path towards the Palace of Rending Flames!"

"YEEEEEEEEEEAAAAAAAAHHHHHH!"

Kanon-sama… please wait for me.
I am, as the representative of all Gluttony Demons, going to get a taste of you.

Part 3: Let's Dig in

My regrets came all too quickly.
The fact that I wasn't going to be able to eat a Demon Lord, coupled with the swiftly-dwindling motivation of my Legion.

It's not that I had let my guard down. Perhaps I should say, 'as expected of a Demon of Old.'

Generally, Demons get stronger the longer they age. It's because they have more time to proceed down their tree. Of course, power doesn't rise if you spend the whole time doing nothing, but at the same time, the Demon World isn't the type of environment where you can spend all your time doing nothing.
Even without Gluttony, the order of the Demon World is survival of the fittest. In a world like this, it's a terrible move to underestimate a Demon who has perpetually carved out their existence.

Taking the shortest path, my arm has long-since entered the territory of the Lord of Sloth.
And there was something I noticed.
Gar has a rare, bewildered, expression as he turns his eyes towards me.

"… Zebul-zama… the Zone is…"

"Yeah, I know… damn, it isn't breaking at all. What is this…"

It was frighteningly secure, and the air was stagnant.
That was the property of this field every Demon allied to a Demon Lord should know of.

『Abyss Zone』.

A battle for land between Demon Lords.

We were once allies, but now Leigie's 『Abyss Zone』 is bearing its fangs at an opposing army. As the zone works with the Demon Lord at the center, I'm not affected, but even so, for my Zone not to reach Gar who's running right alongside is more than abnormal.
I've eaten for long enough that numbers are of no importance, but I don't remember anything like this.

My instincts tell me there's only a little more to go… The Zone I'm competing with is stronger than any I've encountered before, but with him this far away, I have the advantage.
But I'm just a little lacking in power. It's been two days since we marched forth after eating that Demon Lord, so hunger is one of my problems.
In this state, I can't make full use of my power of Gluttony.

"It's just a little further… damn, even if it took time, and we would have to take a detour, I should have eaten another Demon Lord before coming here…"

As expected of Rank Three. He's really giving me trouble. From start to finish, he's completely different than those other two.
Even if it doesn't matter in fights between Demon Lords, when armies are involved, 『Abyss Zone』 makes a huge difference. Rather, if a friendly Zone is broken through, it's best to retreat.
Well, the moment it breaks is usually the moment before defeat, so that's quite impossible.

After proceeding a while, I sensed the scent of excitement and fighting spirit drifting around.
It's no Glutton Demon. It's much sweeter, a scent that whets my appetite.
Battle is just around the corner. I don't know if their Demon Lord is there, but it feels

that they won't let us pass so easily.
That's about right. If they did something like letting the Demon Lord who ate two others pass, their presiding Lord would get executed by Kanon-sama. That's exactly why those past two lords launched attacks on me despite their fear.

Should I just eat these guys already?

I turn to my own army.
No, not yet. Even if I do, the power I'll gain from it is limited. I'm not sure about General Class, but any Demons below that will go into my stomach without purpose.
In the first place, breaking through their Abyss Zone by eating the friendly soldiers it's supposed to strengthen is pointless.

Will the Demon Lord come out?

That's the main problem.
If he isn't there, then in the worst case, I could use a skill to eat their entire army… with Gluttony Skills, it's possible.
If the Demon Lord comes to attack personally, I'll have to concentrate on that, so I'll have to leave Leigie's army to my own troops. To combat Leigie's army without the bonuses of my Zone is a bit much, even for the Gula Army that specializes in attack.

From a strategic standpoint, the enemy should send their Demon Lord. Unless the army is considerably powerful, you have to send a Demon Lord to combat another if you want a chance of victory.
But the opponent is Sloth. With that in mind, there's no way he'll come out. What's more, he should be a Demon of the same level as me. The pursuit of his cravings should have become his existence itself by now.
And in order to substantiate that, Leigie has never stepped on the battlefield alongside his army. At the very least, within all my memory, Leigie hasn't fought a single time.

I feel my canines with my tongue, and start up a Skill.
Let's show off my appetite to Leigie for a bit.

A support Skill, 『Fleeting Requiem』.

With me at the center, all area within a few meters is visited by 『Night』.
Those touched by it have their magic devoured, a Skill of Gluttony. It's a variation on 『Wave of Starvation』, and one of the ones I obtained upon become a Demon Lord so long ago.
To those that touch it, it inflicts damage, and all magecraft and skills that try targeting it are disassembled, and used to supplement my own magic. It truly is a manifestation of my ceaseless appetite.

It even devours Leigie's Abyss Zone, and while it may only be a small radius around me, I deploy my own Zone.
Like a slap on the face, I felt a strong bitter sensation. On the unexpected sensation, I grimaced.
Just eating his Zone tastes this bad… this is why Sloths are…

"Zebul-sama, something is coming."

At that moment, my subordinate gave a report.

Across the desert, the shadow of a single person running entered my senses.
No, it's wrong to say it was only one. It was one, but at the same time, many.
Those same shadows, of a Female Demon around the same size as me, split into numerous bodies, and came closer with considerable speed.

"… Hit her down!"

The entire army is late in following my orders.
The approaching party… was made of only one.
More importantly, about a few hundred meters behind her, an army more than twice our size was approaching…
They sure are underestimating an army led by a Demon Lord. I'm amazed that there's a skill that can deceive my eyes, but even so, the power I sense from that girl isn't great.
A slight bitter scent is mixed in with the smell coming from her. She isn't a Demon Purely aiming to fulfill a single desire.

A sharp killing intent emanates from all the split bodies as one.
I look through my mind for what sort of skill it could be. Through the large number of Demons I've eaten, my battle experience sees through it.
It's probable a Luxuria high ranking Skill. I believe there was a Demon Lord Class Skill that could birth multiple phantasms with physical substance.

Well, it doesn't seem to be coming from her herself.

Fufu… do you not know of my Rank? Of my name?
Whether you be a『Knight』or a『General』… if you think that's enough to beat a Demon Lord, then I sure am being looked down upon.

… Well, you'll have plenty of time to regret it. Within my stomach, that it.

One of our front line Demon's『Wave of Starvation』eats up one of the illusions. Against the power that devoured her magic, I definitely witnessed the small girl knit her brow.
She's inexperienced. She hasn't been in battle long enough. No, she's been sent to confirm our power, I see.

Fufu, so be it. How about I play with you?

Against the young girl's fleeting beauty, the Demon's hand stopped for a moment.
His appetite quickly returns, but he's too late to launch an attack. The girl easily dodges, and gouges out his throat. What refreshing skill.
To be bewildered by beauty… Fufu, how nice it is to be young. Go youth. Go youth.

I reach my tentacles through the ground to eat the fallen Demon. My magic increases ever-so-slightly.
I don't have the time to savor the taste, but your sacrifice will not be in vain… because this world is survival of the fittest.

Gar uses his fangs to pierce the girl from behind.
But that body immediately fades like a dream, and it dispersed as pure magic energy.
Without leaving anything behind, I suck it up. It's sweet. It's extremely sweet magic. I see. Lust. She's at least experienced enough to know when to use and cancel a skill.

She may be tastier than I first thought.

Perhaps I have been blessed by the heavens. The moment I took in her magic, my power reached a level surpassing Leigie's.
Along with the sensation of something shattering, Leigie's Zone broke, and mine expanded. The second it came over her, the girl's movements stopped.
What's more, all of her bodies at the same time.

Fufufu, that's how powerful his Zone was. She's never experienced it breaking, I'll bet.
But that's no good. You can't stop moving at a time like this…

I quietly snake my feelers through the ground, and skewer the ten closest bodies. The bodies that had been pierced from blind spots are all reduced to magic, as they fade like mist.
It seems the main body wasn't among them. Well, she's only scouting out the situation anyways.

But, even so, her magic is quite splendid. Even if I can't eat up a Demon Lord, this flavor is plenty.
My stomach is growling. That girl has talent as an ingredient…

… Okay, a gourmet like me will give you the best possible preparations before eating you up.

Just when I had resolved myself, I had an exceedingly bad premonition.
I immediately deployed my own『Wave of Starvation』.
That was my instinct, born from all the time I've lived as a Lord of Gluttony, and following it was the right choice.

From the distance, a power rivalling a Demon Lord came into being.
A dragon of fire that sucked up everything in its path collided with my wave.
Heat and light that didn't fall short of the Demon World's sun competed with my Wave of Starvation.

"Zebul-zama, thiz iz…"

"Ku… fu… could you not talk to me for a bit?"

It was a terrific barrage of light and flame.
It may even rival that weapon the heavenly soldiers used. Divine flames that might just rival Heavenly Judgement.
The hot wind that breaches my wave shakes my hair, but it stick to my forehead due to my sweat.

Just what is this power!? Even if my stomach may be empty, its magic is so vast that the Rank Five's Wave of Starvation cannot devour it!?
Wrath? No, this is… not the fire of anger. The taste is different.

At that moment, I remembered the gossip the late Mizuna had brought up earlier.
Quite recently, a certain Demon Lord was awarded a legendary Demon Blade.

… I see, so this is… Demon Blade Celeste. The blade that bosts the name of the L Class Dragon that had surpassed Demon Lords!!

Fufufu, I had forgotten…

Listen properly! Isn't he your Rival Demon Lord?
The troubled face of the leader of the inspectors sent to me, Mizna, passes through my brain.

I see, this truly is… a threat.
Mizna, it seems you were more proficient than you thought yourself.

"Iz it the enemy Demon Lord!?"

"Fufufu… if it was the Demon Lord using it, we would be ash by now."

The heat, the light, they turn to a sublime flavoring, as they supplement me.
A feeling of satisfaction expands through my body. What a flavor… what dense umami, this impact that simply perks you up. Splendid, so this is the power of a Demon Blade!
One more, I have one more thing to look forward to…

My wave of Starvation's power increases, and it barely starts to push back the Demon Blade's flames.
It feels that power is overflowing all over my body…

"How tasty…! If the sword's power can give off this much flavor, then just how delicious is the blade itself…"

"Zebul-zama, unfair!! Having it all to yourself…"

"With people of your caliber, you'll die if you try eating it, you know… Fufu, polish yourselves so we can sit at the same dining table one day."

I look over my cute army, that's still conscious of their hunger in a time like this.

They've really given us quite a welcoming present.
Fufu, they've brought a Demon Blade of this level. There's no helping it if they've misunderstood that they can make it without a Demon Lord. It really can't be helped.

As I thought, the Sloth isn't here. If he had been participating, one blow would have ended it.
But that Great Demon Lord sure is awarding out some dangerous weapons… she could have just given it to me…

For Gluttony that preys on the rabble, a contest of powers is the greatest banquet.
I lick my lips as I continue to eat the flame's power.

At that moment, the wave that was definitely gaining traction was suddenly pushed back.
So the output can rise even further… I put my power into controlling the wave.
But the more time passes, the greater advantage I'll gain. This much isn't enough to fill my stomach.

Gluttony has a good affinity with skills that release continuous power, and Demon Blades.
Whether it be fire or ice, of thunder or anything, I can eat it.
Demon Blades of this type depend heavily on the user.

And its output sure is… large. I'm not sure about an ordinary Demon Lord, but it lacks the power to take me down in a single strike.
Though it's not at the level of a sword that can spew unlimited flames, 『Wave of Starvation』 is a basic skill. I can maintain it for hours on end.

"Fufu, how long will they keep this up? If they're able to satisfy my hunger, I may just let them of, you know."

The amazing amount of Magic, the pleasant feeling of my hunger being sated, athrobing feverish feelings spreads across my entire body, and a wave washes over my mind.
Ah, how wonderful. I'm glad we didn't do something inelegant like taking a detour!

I was tasting the flames in a dreamy state, and my eyes were closing as I basked in it, when the Demon Blade's power began to swell up greatly.

It happened in a split second.

The wave that had been fighting evenly was instantly washed away, and my vision was covered with flames that burned everything.

"Wha!?"

"!?"

With a hint of resistance, of a chance to give a final scream, Gar who was standing beside me was burned away.
I instantly extended my tentacles, and ate up that magic right before it destroy my soul.

To me, it was completely unexpected. MY own advantage had made me negligent.
Despite the trance it put me in, the flame within my stomach raise a hunger that seems to devour my entire body. My instincts rage on.

This can't be. This can't be. This can't be. This can't be.

I brush off the flames surrounding me with countless tentacles. My army. The Gluttony Demons, without being given an opportunity to breathe, were absorbed by my tentacles before the flames could reach them.
That energy. That magic. Anyone besides me would definitely be obliterated. I don't have the time to use a skill. In the first place, Gula Skills aren't suited to defense.

I had already decided it. The moment my army was to be ruined… I would carry on their will.
That the army I trained, the army that shared my hunger would be eaten by me personally.
With each swing, my tentacles provided my perpetual energy. Instead of taking in the magic, I used it to strengthen my own power.

The 『Fleeting Requiem』 I was wrapped in faces the flames. The fire's output rivals or exceeds what a Demon Lord of Wrath could release in might.
But unlike the Wave of Starvation, what I'm using right now is a Demon Lord level Skill. Well exceeding an ordinary Demon's Skill level.
Its scope is small, but it cuts me off from Celeeste's flame, and saves up its energy

as it sends it all to me.
Tears are escaping me. That power, that meaning, that supreme taste.

It was likely the enemy Demons' trump card.
The stream of flame ended in only a few seconds. The heat remaining causes the wind to act up, putting the desert in disarray.

Nothing… was left. My army that numbered close to a hundred were all converted to magic, and installed into my stomach.
Celeste's flame was the same.

"Haa haa haa, I'm sorry… everyone…"

I lick my lips. The flood of emotions makes me look up to the sky.
The enemy army is still far. In this wade black desert, I'm all alone.
I put my hands together. I must offer my thanks.

"… Thank you for the meal."

The power I devoured breaks down, and my own might rises.
My Zone, which had lost its own meaning completely surpasses Leigies, and it envelops the desert.
Power is overflowing. More than ever before.

Fufufufufufufu. I can see everything.

The Rank Three Army, and the location of the General Demon who used the Demon Blade.
Spanning several Kilometers, my Zone continued to break Leigie's.
My perception tells me it has expanded explosively.
Just as I thought, the Demon Lord's presence isn't anywhere.

"I made light of you all… Fufufu, to think a normal General could push me back this far… but now I've had a taste of your trump card."

I deactivate『Fleeting Requiem』. The power that had been dissolved by the skill converges on me all at once.
From here on, it's my… no, our turn to attack.

Along with the Enemy General's voice, Demons with numbers that greatly exceed ous rush at us with bloodcurdling expressions.
Their stronger Demons than I had expected. For Demons below General Class, that is.

With you guys' power, I will show my respect by fighting to the fullest.

I lick my lips.

It's time to dig in.

I extend my tentacles from my back, and take a stab at the Demons coming at me.
I sensed it the moment I pierced the first one. Tasty…
Fufufu, as I thought. Good work, Leigie of the Slaughterdolls! As expected of an old generation Demon that survived the Heavenly war! You have a good army on your hands!

I lose myself in eating with the Tentacles. A spear impales my back, and I eat it.
Time passed like a dream. Against a Demon Lord, their fighting spirit doesn't die. What dauntless courage. A powerful Legion that doesn't fall behind my own!

A six armed muscular Demon that seems to be the leader brandishes a sword at me.
I draw my own『Fang Sabre』to hit it down.
My ivory white fang, and the large man's crimson edge meets.
When the edges met, I understood.
Fufufu, I see. This Demon is the Wielder of Celeste. He's giving off a tasty scent.
It's not just the sword, but the Demon himself as well.
I stifle the smile bursting forth from my heart.

"Enemy Leader…"

The Demon raises a heroic laugh, as he slashes at me with the swords in his other hands. I sense that all of them Demon Blades with considerable power. I used my Tentacles to meet them.
This smell, and that fighting style.
A Demon who's amassed this many Demon Blades. He must be a Greed Demon.
And he launches an attack with the flame from before.
He really knows how to use his own power.

"Good skills."

"Ki ki ki, 'tis an honor to be praised by you!!"

Fire flows up from his sword, but without paying heed to the flickering sword, I used my Fang Sabre to go for his neck. As expected of a Demon Blade even I've heard of. If I took an attack from it head on, it looks like it'll be bad. But between a Demon Lord and a general, the basic specs are too different.
Of course, it's not like he's weak. It's not like he's weak, but no matter how much he trains… 『Superbia』aside, for a『Avaritia』, the gap between General and Demon Lord isn't a small one.

My Tentacles go after the small Demon attacking me from behind, and I dodge her blow.
There, was the courageous girl who had tried to launch the first attack.
An ice Demon Blade, and a dagger. Fufu, for a lust to go hand-to-hand… how brave.
I've determined. These two are General Class.
The first is Greed-kun, the second is Lust-kun, and the others are all small fries. I see a difference in fighting ability between the two, but before me, it's not like it matters.
They're all equal food.

"Two of them… a little small, but they look quite tasty."

The girl's movements stop for a moment. It seems this child has a bad habit where she stops moving when she gets surprised on the battlefield. She's much too inexperienced.
I didn't let the chance go, and pierced her. I mean, it's just an illusion, anyways. My eyes told me as such.
Just as I thought, the girl's figure fades like mist. Without wasting a bit, I absorb it, and challenged the large sword swing coming at my back by opening my mouth wide.
The Demon's expression of shock. Fufufu, as I thought, to truly know the taste, I have to use my own mouth…

The other ones scattered around don't tell much of a difference between Gluttony or Greed.

"A Demon Blade… never eaten one before. It may be a delicacy."

"What!?"

I stopped the blade he lowered with his strong arms with my teeth.
The hot metal I feel on my tongue, and the thick magic. The flames leaking out serve as a perfect accent.

I'll eat it… your collection.

I mean, that's how you cook up Greed.
I stop another sword he swung with another hand by holding up my Fang Sabre, while making an obvious gap in defense.

Fufufu, I know you're there. Luxeria.
I know everything. Because right now… you're on my territory.

Young. Young. Young. Young. Young Lust… Aaaaaaaah, how delicious it must be.
I may not be able to endure it any longer.

"Your main body… that magic looks quite delicious."

I surprise her, and in that gap, I used the tongue from the mouth I opened on my back to grasp her sword.
It's a cold and delicious blade. The Greed Demon's expression warps for a second.

"Fufufu, the texture isn't bad…"

I move the tongue gaudily, and pull the sword from the girl's arms.
She sure is powerless. You need to train your physical strength too.. fufu.
The Greed Demon swung another sword in panic, and I stopped it with a mouth I manifested on my hand, before crunching it.

Everything was excellent.

High battle experience. Status as a Demon. None of it even reached my feet.

The moment I broke one of the Greed Demon's collection, he was wide open.
This is why Demons these days are… have I started sounding old again?

I used my tongue to collect up the fragments of the sword I caught, and continued to chew it.
Greed raises a scream. Don't worry, your prided sword is extremely tasty.

No, is it about time yet?

As expected, the Greed Demon stopped moving, but when I extended my tongue at him, it was blown away with amazing force.

What!? What is it, all of a sudden?

A boorish Bastard Sword crashes into the ground.
As if it had exploded, pebbles fly everywhere. Continuing on with strange

movements, the blade came at my tongue and tentacles with tremendous momentum, and blew them away altogether.

"… What are you?"

It was a lead-colored skeleton. Its height was around two meters. Without any sign of emotions, or any presence, it simply boorishly continued to swing its arms.
But its physical strength far surpassed that Greed Demon.
It was just too incomprehensible. It's no Demon. It doesn't give off a Demon's scent.
I take a last lick of Celeste, and let go. No matter how weak the opponent, I've resolved never to be careless.

"… What could that be… it's not a Demon, it has no presence."

"Ki ki ki, it's just a candlestick holder, you know! Boss's just put a little spell on it!"

The skeleton kicks off the ground, and rushes at me like a beast.
It swings the giant sword taller than my body.
It's definitely fast, and it has power, but still, its attacks aren't that significant to me. I can see through them, and if I just challenge its sword head on, I'm pretty sure I can overpower it.
I was surprised because the scent it gave off wasn't that of a lifeform, but that's about it.

Still, this one… doesn't look tasty at all, does it.
Candlestand? That thing that holds up candles? Why can something like that move?

"… Doesn't look very tasty. Though I look like this, I'm quite a gourmet."

I parry the blade, and sever one of its arms.
There's no change in its expression. Does it not feel pain? And wait, in the first place, is it even alive?

Well, I guess none of that really matters.
In the previous exchange, I understood. Greed-kun and Lust-kun are definitely strong, and Candlestand-kun isn't bad, but they're no match for me.
Celeste is their only means of dealing Damage to me, and I doubt they have a trump card greater than that. For a mere General to aim to annihilate a High Class Demon Lord, it's an outrageous weapon. It's plenty.

I took some distance. It's about time to get down to cooking.

I activate one of my Demon Lord skills, 『Evil Eye』.
It's a set of Demon Eyes that can bind the movements of Demons lesser than me. There's the restriction that I can't move either, but as a skill, it has plenty of uses.
And like that, I started up a Gluttony Skill.

『Over Table』

I eat the magic floating around in the air.
From all over my body, even my face and feet, an amount of tentacles incomparable to those before sprouted out.
Countless feelers dripping in purple liquid.
They're fresh arms that have plenty of appetite in them. Fufu, can you guys

withstand them?

As a parting gift, I'll explain the cooking method, as I extend my tentacles to their targets.
It'll be troublesome if they think of them the same as those before.
Fufufu, this is… not Demon class. It's a Demon Lord class Skill.

Lust and Greed dodge, and skeleton tries to take it with his sword, falling to pieces as a result.
In order to get a greater certainty of the taste, I pull it in with the tentacles, and chewed it with my normal mouth, but as I thought, it's just an inanimate 『item』. Without any careful construction, just an object. It isn't really tasty.
But it seems it was one of Greed-kun's collection, so he raises quite a nice scream.
Fufu, it looks like I've finished one step in the cooking process.

"Dammit, in order to get that, do you know just how much trouble I went through? How many Demons I killed…!?"

"Fufufu, it looks like I did something inexcusable. Don't worry, you'll meet up in my stomach soon enough."

I extend my tentacles.
Of course, I don't do anything as boorish as hit the main dish directly.
I snack on the other demons, while aiming for Greed-kun's weapons, and Lust-kun's equipment bit by bit.
The young tentacles are much faster than normal ones. Greed-kun is dodging them in a fine manner, but the hurdle's too high for our precious Lust-kun, and the skin she covered up so well is showing more and more, and there was quite a bit of fun in that.
Her eyes filled with killing intent are beautiful. Even as a fellow woman, I may develop some passion for her.

"What are you planning…"

"Fufufu, do you go as far as to crunch the shell when eating?"

I swing the tentacles.
Fufufu, sorry, sorry, I had made a misunderstanding.
As a gourmet, let me acknowledge you. You definitely are a Luxelia. And a first-rate one at that.
The finest dessert. I'll teach you true pleasure.

Celeste is hard. But even if it may be a Demon Blade, if it keeps clashing with my power, it'll be reduced to shambles.
He probably ran out of stock a while ago. Greed-kun is now just swinging around Celeste alone.
From here on out, it becomes monotonous work.
But that's fine. It's a crucial process.
I incessantly pester Greed-kun. I strip Lust-kun bit by bit.
Things like this increase one's appetite. There's nothing tastier than the food I make for myself.

By the time Lust-kun had achieved her birthday suit, the two of them started discussing something.
I stop my hands for a bit, and watch them. Do they still have some hand they can

play?
My army's been crushed too. If I don't make you tasty enough for their share as well, I'll be troubled.
If they're going at it, you might as well show me everything you've got. I'll bet that will increase the flavor.

After coming this far, you're still embarrassed? As she hides her breasts and crotch with her hands, Lust-kun and Greed-kun have somewhat grim faces as they speak.

Still… to think something like that is fine in the presence of an enemy, they sure are young. How long ago was it that I did something like that…
As I was probing through a few thousand years of distant memory, I noticed is.

My own wind was blown away by another's.
The few kilometers of territory I took were immediately reverted, and taken by another Demon Lord.
It was merely a quiet, tasteless, and dreadfully peaceful magic, as if it was just there to exist, and nothing else.
At the same time, something equivalent replaced my power that had been seeping into the earth.

How can this be… why, at this point in time…

"… Oy, oy, what did you guys do? Is this part of your plan?"

There's no way that's the case. At this point, the revival of their Zone wouldn't overturn their certain defeat.
The difference between us isn't one of that low level.

But in an instant, none of that mattered anymore.

What was in front of my eyes, wasn't Lust-kun or Greed-kun.
As if I had been hit by lightning, I felt it in my soul.
The presence of a being great enough to rival mine self. An existence of darkness.
A sense of exaltation that made it feel like just by him standing, something amazing would happen. The feeling of an absolute existence, where even if you added together Lust-kun and Greed-kun, it wouldn't reach anywhere near it.

I see… I'm really lucky. It seems even the Big Boss will come out to meet me.
Right now, I'm in exceedingly good condition. If I eat Lust-kun and Greed-kun, I'll probably rise even higher, but I don't have the time to be worrying about those two.

I'm not sure by what intent, but the black-haired slim youth, with a sluggish expression on his face, threw himself onto the ground.
His absurd movements have earned my admiration.

This one is…
One of those in service to the Greatest Demon King.
A Lord of Demons, who rules over Indolence, and Depravity.

"… You. Who are you?"

On my question, the Demon Lord spoke with a lazy look on his face.

"… I see."

Part 4: Thanks for the Meal

"Fufufufufu, I see… so this was you guys' secret plan. You're not bad. I didn't notice it at all."

"… Eh? Ah, no…"

Lust-kun has a confused expression as she looks at the horizontal King of Sloth.

Her facial expression is no lie. Eh? A Coincidence? Nono, that can't be…
It's impossible that the Lord of Laziness was just randomly passing by of all things.

But both Lust-kun and Greed-kun's eyes were lost at sea.

"Why am I…"

"… Eh? You're still saying that at this point in time!?"

The existence that had materialized at roughly the same time as Laigie, a girl with crimson hair, scowled with all her might.
Her uniform, with black as the base, was the same as what Mizna and the others wore. She's from the Order of Black.
She pulls at Leigie, and is somehow trying to get him to stand. This situation perfectly matches the image I have of him being pulled around at one of the Great Demon King's inauguration ceremonies or another.

… I see, so she dragged the Lord of Sloth onto the battlefield. What a skilled Ira.
It seems I really have been wasteful. Mizna… I should have cooked you up properly before I ate you. Sorry.

But even while being pulled at, Leigie shows no signs of getting up. He's shaking his head from side to side with an extremely reluctant attitude. This deed is Sloth, without a doubt. It's as if there's no spirit in his eyes.
I can only think that he's waiting for me to eat him. At the same time, that is the nature of Sloth Demons.
Those guys are extremely hard, but at the same time, they don't really move.

Fufufu, how interesting. It really is interesting. To try to fight me like that…
In the wake of a battle between powerful Demon Lords, my fighting spirit blazes up, along with my hunger.

I guess I should give a proper greeting to start things off.

"Lord of Sloth. It's a pleasure to meet you… No, it's been a while. My name is Zebul Glaucus… a Demon Lord that governs Gluttony."

"I see."

On my self-introduction, Leigie answered with just as little interest as before. What's more, just two words.
But I can't be fooled by his appearance or actions.

Leigie's Zone is definitely stronger than mine.
He's just lazy, and by no means is he weak. Even after he's clearly showing a ridiculous amount of magic, for some reason, my appetite isn't welling up. In a sense, I think Gluttony has a bad affinity with him.

"Leigie-sama! You finally came all the way here, so go fight already!"

"… But that one's…. strong…"

On Wrath-kun's words, Leigie directed a reluctant face that stemmed from the very depths of his heart.
Wrath-kun's expression is dyed with anger, and despair. Her burning hot magic is like a perfume that tickles my nostrils. It's a really tasty scent.

Fufufufufufu, AHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA, could it be that even when he's taking me on, he thinks he can easily destroy me?

"I think you're underestimating me too much, Leigie."

"Yeah… Curry isn't enough for this…"

Along with some incomprehensibly idiotic lines, the battle started without warning.

As a test, I sent my young arms to attack him from all direction. I saved a single one of them and sent it at Wrath-kun.
Even though he's complaining, Leigie probably hasn't let his guard down. Wrath-kun back steps to avoid the tentacle, before emitting flame from the palm of her hand.

The Tentacle drinks up the flame, but it's unable to contain it all. The tip is slightly burned. That's quite a powerful bearer of Ira.
But that was quite a splendid taste… I vomited.

"Uoo, GUEEEEEEEEH!"

I kneel, call back my tentacles, and press both of my arms to the ground.
It felt as if, dreadful vigor, my stomach was dumping all of its contents left and right.
My head is shaken up greatly, as it's filled with an acrid stench. The convulsions of my body won't stop. While it felt like that, nothing actually left my mouth, though.
Having felt strong agony for once in a long time, tears filled my eyes.

W-what is this!?

With vision made hazy be tears, I look over.
What sort of disgrace am I showing in battle? But on the enemy side, none of them seem to know what's going on either. After I had suddenly tried spitting something up, they merely looked at me with suspicious eyes. They're not even launching any attacks.
In a blurring world, I looked at the one who, contrary to the swift Wrath-kun, hadn't moved a muscle. He also had tears oozing out as he spoke.

"… It hurts."

Looking closely, in all the places the tentacles should have impaled, his clothing was torn. From the skin I can see in the gaps, a small amount of blood drips.

So this is the extremes of『Acedia』, said to excel in endurance.
The King of Sloth… how hard…

An overwhelming VIT incomparable to the General Class Sloth I defeated long ago. Even for the arms that could easily devour Demon Blades, they aren't nearly strong enough.

Gufu… fufufu, i-interesting, isn't it…!!
I wipe away my tears, and use the Evil Eyes. Excluding Leigie, the rest of the Demons are bound. As I might add, Leigie isn't moving either, but that's of his own free will.

I somehow contain the nauseous feeling, but the instant I tried to use a skill, I noticed a terrifyingly bitter scent piercing my nose. Of the Sloth Demons I fought in the past, the impact far surpassed all. It was a heinous scent that I couldn't believe originated in this world.

I had been so concentrated on the violent nausea, and I hadn't noticed it at all…

When I check my Magic, I see a small portion of it has restored.
It's too much to have just been from eating Wrath-kun's flames back there.

I'm in despair. Is there no god in this world!?

My trauma was overwritten here and now.
I glare at Leigie. I wiped my mouth with my sleeve, and offered a complaint.

"… You, you taste atrocious… I can't even believe this taste comes from this world."

"… It hurts."

With sluggish motions, Leigie rubbed the torn spots. The blood has already vanished. And wait, even if he was bleeding, that wasn't a level where he actually took any damage from it!!
Wrath-kun is looking at Leigie with despair in her eyes, but I should be the one despairing.

This is bad. Just what is that flavor…
The General Class Sloth doesn't reach his footholds, it's a flavor that blasphamizes against, and desecrates the very concept of food.
It really is out of this world. Just what divine providence gave birth to something like that? Up until now, I thought that any and every item in this vast world was edible, but I must take that back with all due haste. It's a taste that even changes my outlook on life.
It's far surpassed what can be endured. I don't ever want to taste it again

… Which means I'll be unable to absorb power from Leigie.
If I tried to bear it, and suck it up, I would probably curl up and die before I could do anything to him.
Hahaha, what meaning is there in a Gula that cannot eat!!

All in all, what an annoying attribute.

With eyes blurred by tears, Leigie spoke up all of a sudden.

"I give up."

"Hah? Why?"

"I hate pain."

"Haaaaaaaaaaah?"

J-just how did this one become a Demon Lord… no, how did he survive for this long?

In a sense, his words were more impactful than the taste, and my mind went blank for a moment.

The moment I came to it, I noticed Leigie had fired off a strange power, a Skill. It was nullified by one of my passives, my Mental Pollution Resistance. Leigie's expression hopelessly screams out, 'this is a pain' as he clicks his tongue.

My hunger becomes bloodlust, and stirs up wind as it sweeps over the desert.
… Fu. Fu. Fu. You sure are looking down on me. To launch a surprise attack when I was negligent, that's a disgrace to all Demons…
So be it. Kanon can go to hell for all I care. I'll put my best effort into killing you. In this world, there shouldn't exist anything that can't be eaten.

A majority of Gula Skills focus on eating the enemy.
If you exclude them, my usable skills are quite limited.

I clench my hand with plenty of power, and wish for fang. Fangs to gnaw and reduce everything to its base.

Leigie, with movements slower than the laziest of people, with an expression harder to read than the slothiest of sloths, searched through his pocket, before his arm lost power, and his hand fell to the ground.

"… I forgot my piece… do you happen to have one? It can be Chess or anything…"

"Hah? Chess? T-there's no way I have something like that!"

Wrath-kun has an irritated expression as she rebukes him.
Any and everything they're doing. I can only see it as them making light of me.

Ah, it's no good.
Fine, I'll destroy you.

I'll show you the limits of Gluttony.
Don't think Gula is nothing but eating.

I consume an amount of magic much greater than when I summoned the young arms, and my hunger has become almost unbearable.
So much that it feels like my stomach will gain its own will, and start to eat me.
And I used that skill for the first time in ten thousand years.

『Fang of Origin』

Completely ignoring the enemy's attribute to eat any and everything, a Gula Skill that manifests the fangs of a Demon God.

It's not like it changes my flesh, and it's not like it summons something for me to manipulate. Pure equipment, it calls forth a sword. One of the skills known as Phantasm Armaments.

The blade of darkness, born of the origin of Gluttony came into being with my fingers wrapped wround it.

A longsword with the hilt and blade and all else colored black. Its height a meter and a half.
But the reach doesn't matter. This is my fang, and at the same time, an existence representing the insatiable hunger of the world.
I discard the blade I had used when fighting that Greed-kun. With both hands, I take a stance with the long sword. I absorb back all the tentacles.

Foolish Sloth that fails to make a single move, I glare at the Sloth who fails to feed my appetite.

"… Fu… fufu… then let's start the battle between Demon Lords."

"… Haa…"

Leigie lets out a sigh.

Damn you… making fun of me!
I take a step forward. Using the physical strength of a Demon Lord, I explosively propel myself, and instantly closed the distance…

My body stiffens all at once. Within my head, a Mental Pollution Recovery Spell activates automatically, and the stiffness is dispelled, but in that time, everything became so slow.
I feel heavy. Unable to bear the large burden that had suddenly been placed on top of me, I fell to my knees.
Pressure? No, this is definitely something different. My weight has physically increased.
I can't continue while gripping the sword.

From the time he had appeared, Leigie had barely moved half a step, but he directed dispirited eyes at me as I fell to the ground.

"You… what did you do…"

"… Haa…"

Leigie sighs once more.
No, I get it. I've been hit with a Sloth Skill before.
Sloth should have some skills that obstruct an enemy's movements.

But… a skill great enough to bind me? That can't be!

"Gu… wai, Leigie-sama…"

"Fu… ya…"

"Gugu… B-boss!?"

The other three raise their own cries.
I somehow turn my unmoving head, and see that, for some reason, Leigie's army was on the ground as well.

This one… he calmly drags in his own army.

No, that's wrong.
In a moment' judgement, I extend my tentacles, and use them to support up my body.
And finally up, I looked down at the Lord of Sloth. In his eyes, forget bloodlust, there isn't even any fighting spirit.

This is… not just any obstruction skill. He's raising gravity.
I comprehend. I'm experiencing it first-hand. Leigie of Sloth. There's probably a matter of affinity, but this one's power… he's surpassed mine.
With my shaking hand, I lift the sword, and point it at him.

Just how many kilos, haw many tons has it been increased by? Why is it that when there's a weight where even I cannot move, his own army isn't crushed to death?
I'm going to lose to a Lord that doesn't even have the will to fight?

"… Fu fu fu. It's been a while… since someone last got me to kneel."

"I see."

Leigie offers his fifty cents.
At the same time, I experienced a sudden impact from the side.

What? What's happening now?

Since he didn't have any fighting or killing intent, my reaction was delayed.
A power great enough to rattle my entire body. My form, which was barely being supported by the tentacles, was easily blown off.
My field of vision shakes. But the dizziness soon disappears from a Demon Lord Level status abnormality resistance.
There wasn't the slightest sign of a presence by me. Leigie didn't move a single step either.
I dug the sword into the ground, which was moving by me at an incredible speed. I extend more than a hundred tentacles, and dig them in as well.
I feel myself scraping at the ground. The friction heats up the tips of the tentacles, and smoke begins to rise from the earth.

It was a physical attack. I didn't receive much damage. But I cannot understand what had happened.
A failure to comprehend is one of the scariest things that can befall you on a battlefield.
Perhaps because we were now separated by a few hundred meters, the weight on my body disappeared.

I have a chance!

Demons are by no means omnipotent.
Sloth is a Skill Tree that excels in endurance. If you look at it from the other side, they don't boast particularly high offensive power.

Even when taking me by surprise, he didn't manage to give me any significant damage.

It's not sating my hunger, but other emotions start coming up.
Interesting. How many millennia has it been since I fought an opponent of equal level to me?

My hundred tentacles dig into the ground behind me.
I hold the sword in a low stance, and concentrate magic on my feet to enhance them.
Gravity too great to stand? Then I'll take you out in a single stroke before it affects me.
Leigie is definitely hard, but if I split him in two, he won't be able to use a Skill.

When I took a step forwards, alarms went off in my head.
The foreboding signal affected the entirety of my trained instincts as a warrior. I hurriedly jumped to the side, before a thunderous sound came from the place I had been, and a large dent appeared in the ground.
I can't see. I can't see it, but… something's there.
Frightening speed, and weight.

I comprehend. This is what sent me flying before.
I detect it coming at me from the side with the flow of the air, and jump to avoid it. The weakness that you can't move in the air doesn't exist for me, when I have countless tentacles to propel myself. I suddenly changed course, and extended the tentacles to hit down whatever it was.

The tentacles dig into something invisible, and I started vomiting in midair.

My movements stop completely. In my direction, it comes down.

"Guoee… gu… wai… unfai…"

Not a small blow like before, as if the sky itself was coming down, an impact mercilessly crushed my body.
My skull makes some creaking sounds, and the hand I had reached upwards by instinct is making ominous cracking sounds as it bends in the wrong direction.
It's not at a level where I can ignore the impact like before, I'm pressed into the ground so hard it feels my soul will go out.

But right now, the pain doesn't matter. This bitterness is terrifying. While crawling on the ground, I let out tears as I vomit, but that thing continues to come down on me relentlessly.
Its scope is even wider than before.

Wave of Starvation?
Fleeting Requiem?

Don't be stupid… if I used something like that, I would end up eating it. I'd be forced to absorb it.

That taste that comes from something beyond this world.
Past the Demon World, a place even lower. The greatest depths of hell, a place where nothing can escape, in hades where all unthinkable things gather, where the tainted mud of despair builds up, this taste is that of a being a Demon cannot fathom as

another Demon…

The impact comes down a second and third time without rest, beating down on my body, and hitting me into the ground. My consciousness leaves me for a moment. My vision shakes, and my Status Abnormality Resistances are working on overtime. If I didn't have them, I would have been immobilized by the dizzy feeling long ago.

Damn, with that absent-minded expression, he shows no mercy.

Each one of the skills he's using falls short of the one-hit-kill ones Demon Lords usually boast, but that just makes it all the more annoying. As if he's playing with me, the impact that's identity I have yet to know continues to assail my body, and the taste is the same as Leigie, making It my greatest enemy of all time. That much is true.

The Leigie in question hasn't changed his location at all.
He's making fun of me.

I anticipate the moment it's going to strike next, pierce my tentacles into the ground, and forcefully throw myself sideways. It's not strong. Its damage definitely isn't that high, but taking that on again and again is bad.
I forcefully set my broken arm. Using up my stored up nutrients, I'm able to fully recover it.
But without relishing in that, I kicked the ground.
The impact hit the place I was just before.

Let's think.
What is… this Skill?
A homing attack Skill? Wind? Unattributed Energy?
Each and every one of a Demon's Skills have meaning. Naturally, they change based on a Demon's cravings.
Just as Gluttony is specialized in eating others, Sloth should have some specializations.
What is it?

Making other people fellow Sloths? Wrong. No, maybe it's not too far off, but that isn't its basic nature.

Far in that direction, I see Leigie lazily lowering his hand onto the ground.

That's it!

A Skill to… transmit attacks across distance.
Meaning an『Acedia』skill to repel foreign enemies without moving.

I dodge the wide-range attack that came on me from above. In the ground, was a large hand print, five meters from one end to the next.
What a stupid skill. But it's a fact that I was made a sport of by that worthless skill.

I keep my eyes concentrated on Leigie's hand movements, and I rush forward. The second it starts to come down, I take a large leap to the side.
I try to capture the lowered fist with my sword. The invisible hand is easily ripped through, but it doesn't seem that Leigie took any damage from it. Even if I damage these hands, he doesn't get any feedback… It doesn't have the power to finish me off,

but it doesn't have any obvious demerits either. Just the fact that he can't use his arms for other things, I guess. What a useful Skill.

I handle the attack aimed at me horizontally with the sword. Invisible fingers… With just that, magic surpassing that of a General's disperses and floats through the air. It truly is a pity I cannot eat it.

… No, is this the time to think about whether it's edible or not?
I have to attain victory against Kanon-sama no matter what. I have a need to triumph, and confirm her taste. For the sake of my departed men as well.
For that sake, the explosive magic Leigie has will be a great weapon.
I'm sure of it. If you only compare magic, he's far above me.
Damn, how long has this bastard been alive?

But if I keep eating him, I'll definitely die. I'll break down from the terrible flavor, and die. As a Demon Lord of Gluttony, that is quite regrettable.
But… but if it's just once more…!

Right. Resolve myself. That is the way to victory.

Terrible? So what?
The remnants of the violent acridity in my nose is still trampling over my sanity.
Good or bad, that doesn't matter.

Make my resolve, and look at the enemy.
For my sake and mine alone. For my power and mine alone. Leigie, I'll…

"… Eat you."

"… Please give me a break already."

There are no breaks on the…
The moment I got irritated by his mocking voice, my body was sent flying sideways.
His attacks really lack any form of motivation.

Just as I eat, as Wrath rages, and Greed seeks, Leigie simply lazes around without meaning.
That really doesn't excite my appetite at all, but what admirable consistency.

The Lord of Sloth… I see, I have a slight grasp of it.
Diverse skills that can toss around even a Demon Lord like me.
This is one who dived into the abyss of Acedia, and learned it to its origins?

… So be it. In return I'll show you. The result of my supreme pursuit of Gula, the power I've obtained.
I use the Evil Eyes. I direct it at Leigie's attack, and easily stop it.

I use my Wave of Starvation to absorb the flames of Wrath that came from the one trying to ambush me from behind. I'm not so weak as to fall from a surprise attack of one who isn't even a Demon Lord.
The first edible magic in a while wipes away the remains of the bitterness within my body.

I don't care about the damage. Wrath-kun and Lust-kun and Greed-kun don't matter to me at the moment.

I concentrate my mind.
I bring up my left arm, and pray. To the god of hungry souls.
Wind pressure assails me from left and right. With a groaning sound, my ribs break. My brain understands that I'm being crushed between that man's hands.
I don't let go of the sword gripped in my right hand. That's my trump card. My arm breaks. I don't let go. My innate healing works. My body returns to normal. Every time it recovers, it's broken once more.
Leigie closes his hand. From all around my body, I feel an immense weight. My bones are being broken as if they were toothpicks. My body raises a scream at the sense of pain I haven't felt in a long time.
I can't use any defensive skills. They'll end up eating Leigie.
In the heat encroaching my body, and the surges of pain, I took a deep breath, and prepared myself.
I fill my fangs with killing intent. I use all my might to activate that skill.

『Eater's Plate』

With a roaring sound, the ground tears, the desert rends. Against the immense magic, of which a normal person of the human race wouldn't hold up just be being in its presence, the heavens rumble, and space distorts.
In hot haste, Lust-kun and Greed-kun flee. The Demon Lord sat through the maelstrom peacefully. No, he's lying down.

What I called forth was Eaters Plate.
A large space a few hundred meters across. Without fangs, or tongue, endless hunger. A space specialized to do nothing but sate an unbearable starvation. If you looked from the sky, you would probably see a large semi-circular fissure in the earth.

And I was taken aback.

Into the hole that suddenly opened in the ground, the one I set as the target, Leigie, calmly fell. He yawned with a sleepy expression.
Sloth has a bad affinity with Wrath, Gluttony and Pride. Demons with a high attack power. The reason for this being they generally don't move around. There's no way an immobile Demon is a good enemy. You can leisurely prepare your skills, and as long as they don't get to be considerably strong, they're fated to be hunted down.
But even so, this conclusion is outside of my expectations.

Eh? What? Is that how it is?
For what reason did I fight so hard up until this point?

I was planning to rip him to shreds with the sword once he jumped out of the way to dodge, but…
I turn my eyes to the black longsword in my hand. Phantom Armaments don't have a set reach. By my will, I can freely extend it up to a point. When I got a chance, it was to be my supreme trump card.

The giant mouth closes.
I relax the power wrapped around my body, and release myself.
With my right hand, I scratch my face.

"… That was a bit anti-climactic."

"… I see."

I heard something I shouldn't have from behind me.
I hurriedly turn around, and point my sword. An uninjured Leigie was sloppily sprawled out.
Even after taking my back, he shows no signs of trying to accomplish anything.

Wai…

I instinctively swing the blade. I don't even have to extent it, he's quite close. With a posture like that, this isn't something that he can dodge. But the moment before he was split in two, Leigie's image disappeared.

Shivers run down my spine.
So this is how he escaped the Eater's Plate!?
… Teleportation!? IS that even possible? No, the moment he had suddenly appeared like that, I should have theorized it.

It's my complete mistake.

Evasion and Sloth were too far apart for me to ever think they would go together.
And wait, this is too unfair.

This can't be. This can't be. This can't be. This can't be!

Between Rank Three and Five, there's this much of a difference!?
Did Kanon-sama put this much thought into it when she sent Leigie against me!?

I position the sword behind me to shake off the attack he threw at me.
Behind, the transferred Leigie's arm grazed the blade. Blood poured forth like a water fountain. Due to the smell that came from it, I retreated several steps.
Leigie is crying. Probably from the pain. But by that time, the blood had already stopped, and he had regenerated as if nothing had happened. What amazing regenerative powers. He's devoted himself to a stubborn nature. And on top of that, he's ridiculously weak to pain.

When I tried to go at him again, my body froze once more.

I was seized by his gravity again. I notice. The moment my body freezes beforehand… it's his Evil Eyes.
Leigie is binding me with his Demon Eyes. The Skill that's supposed to only work on lesser beings.
That made the gap in power all to clear.

"Ah, haha, hahaha… Lei… gie. Just how many years… have you lived?"

"… Probably about a hundred."

Like hell!
I have, with you, memories that spam over ten thousand years!!

He's… definitely forgotten it.
Hahahahaha, just fighting him is starting to feel stupid.

Even my hunger that I know will never fully be sated no matter how much I eat is

starting to not matter.

Without saying anything, Leigie closed his eyes half-way.

I tried to think of a reason this Demon Lord had obtained such peerless power.
Unlike Kanon-sama, who had advanced to being a Demon Lord in under ten thousand years with skill and determination, Leigie the Sloth merely amassed power naturally after living an eternal amount of time, and eventually grew to be a Demon Lord.

Without anything that could be called ambition, and no goal in sight. The king of idleness.
The desires of others are of no importance, and he'll probably forget his fight with me soon enough. How envious I am of him.

Before I noticed it, Leigie's hand was clenched so tightly that his knuckles were turning white.
My body was being squeezed from all directions. I feel something snapping inside of me, but there's no pain anymore. I don't even have the motivation to resist. There's no means. I have no appetite.

The result of me living close to a hundred thousand years, my『Fang of Origin』turns to sand in my hand, and disappears.

In front of my eyes, there was Sloth. He opens his eyes lightly. His eyes that did nothing but scream that it was all a pain.

"…Fu… fufu. Bye… bye, Acedia. It was fun."

"… I see."

If possible, I would ask him to go beat Kanon-sama in my place, but I doubt he would ever do something so troublesome.
In the opening on the top of his clenched hand, he painstakingly applied pressure with his other index finger.
As my head was forcefully crushed under the power, I thought to myself…

Thanks for the meal.

Chapter 6: Invidia's Envy

Part 1: Become Someone

It was nothing.

From birth, not once have I gained anything, never have I desired anything, never have I known anything.
Not desired by anyone, known by anyone, and even without any desire for life.
A Life where I didn't even embrace the Original Sin a majority of Demons carry.
Sloth and Greed and Lust and Wrath and Gluttony and Pride and all else, without a sufficient reason for life, and no will.
Before I could become a Plus, perhaps I had to become a Zero first.

I am a mere Minus existence.

In this Demon World, governed by survival of the fittest, Demons without knowledge or power are fated to simply sit and wait for death to take them.
Demons like that were by no means rare, and the imperial capital as well as all the provincial cities were overflowing with such existences.
That's why I believe it's just a coincidence that I escaped such a fate.
There are many Demons whose lives aren't even worth taking, but if I had to say, my luck was good.

There was a man who took me away. There was man who, with a sluggish expression, remained silent, as he let whatever would happen, happen. His black mantle made of well-tailored velvet-like material dragged along the ground, and was always sullied white.
There was a woman who took me away. There was a woman who would let off burning flames that made people she passed on the street tremble, and trampled over the ground as she walked. Her walking staff banged on the ground, as if to scream out its rage in the silent woman's place.
There was me. There was me who, on the roadside, without will, without meaning, gazed on them by pure coincidence from the edge of the street. And next to me, there were my comrades who looked at them just the same.

The man and the woman, and me, and those beside me never exchanged glances, but at the moment of passing… the man reached out his left arm, and my body… without anything to eat before me, my body that was light and frail compared to those of similar ages… was embraced.
Light and clear hand movements as if he were merely grabbing an apple off of a roadside stand.
My comrades didn't say anything as they watched me get taken away, and I didn't say anything either.

From what I heard later, he wanted a pillow. What the hell.

And like that, coincidences piled onto one another, and the Lord of Sloth just happened to be searching for a pillow perfectly my size. By some strange cause and effect, I ended up enlisted in the army of Leigie of the Slaughterdolls.
By the way, this goes without saying, but by the time he held me to his body, Leigie-sama was already asleep.

What happened next wasn't as interesting.

After returning to the Castle of Shadows, I began a struggle for existence against the inanimate normal pillow he already had in use, and at the same time, the inspector monitoring Leigie-sama, the leader of the Order of Black, Kanon Iralaude said something like, "when did you pick up something so dirty!" in an exhausted voice. When I was about to be disposed of by incineration, I was saved by the maid Lorna, who misunderstood Leigie-sama's『Iyo』in a way favorable to me.

By the time I noticed it, I was dressed up in the sort of pretty clothes a doll would wear, and had the 'seconds' that were always made for the million to one chance Leigie-sama would do something as troublesome as actually ask for seconds shoved down my throat. My thoughts finally caught up to me.

Huh? What is this, I thought.

A Demon's longings aren't something they decide for themselves. They are something that is automatically obtained from harboring strong desires.
If you harbor multiple Sins, your desire becomes clouded, and your Class growth as a Demon is slowed. That's why Demons generally subconsciously regulate themselves not to follow any desires besides the ones they pursue.
Without the leisure to seek excess desire, the worst of Demons, where it was merely a miracle I was alive. Given an environment where life was finally sustainable, and finally with some time to give consideration to it, what was the first strong desire that came over me?

What were my strongest feelings?

It was not relief that I was saved, or happy prayers of pure gratitude, or melancholy for my comrades left behind or even self-satisfaction.

This may seem obvious, but it definitely wasn't Luxuria.

To put it simply… Envy.

Jealousy towards typical Demons who carried on and accepted their lives up until now as if it were natural.
Envy toward the beautiful face of the incarnation of flames who was approaching Demon Lord level with her powerful magic, the one who was born the daughter of a Demon Lord and lead the elite Order of Black, Kanon.
Envy towards the one who was born into a house to serve Leigie-sama, and who received a high level education for that sake alone, Lorna.
Envy towards the right hand man of the Lord of Sloth who headed the army, Overruled any and all sorts of power, and took his Lord's power to be supreme, Heard Lauder.

It was envy towards everything in this world.

"If possible, I want to change…"

That was the origin of my Original Sin of Envy.
As I was never granted anything, I felt jealousy towards everything instead.

Darker than『Gula』.

More greedy than『Avaritia』.
More violent than『Ira』.
More whimsical than『Luxuria』.
With less meaning than『Acedia』.
Nastier than『Superbia』.

It was nothing but simple, unsightly『Envy』.

But the moment I obtained it, I thought to myself.
Ah, with this, I finally have a reason to exist.

With this, I can finally become someone.

Part 2: Let's Meet Again

"Well well, after sending out as much as two commanding officers, what a sorry state you've come back in… to bring trouble to Leigie-sama's hands… how shameful."

The young man spoke with cold eyes, as if he were looking at kitchen waste that had fallen to the ground.
He was a handsome youth with eyes as black as the depths of the abyss. As if he were a king, he sat deeply in his chair. With one leg crossed over the other, perhaps he lacked some decorum, but he really was the spitting image of a king. If Leigie-sama and this man stood side by side, ten out of ten would say this man was the Demon Lord of the two.
At the same time, he followed his desire, and spent his time perpetually training and bettering himself. A pure military man.

Heard Lauder. Right hand of Sloth. A Demon governing Pride.

My head began to hurt.
But it definitely wasn't due to anger towards this prideful man.

"No, no… that Zebul Glaucus was a prominent and powerful Demon Lord among Kanon-sama's followers… She was too much of an opponent to deal with without the presence of another Demon Lord."

The one who committed the insolent act of pulling Leigie-sama out, Kanon's dispatch, speaks in a rebuking tone.

Her arrogant means did end up saving our lives, so I can't say anything, but…
From the innermost depths of my brain, I feel the pain of something being stabbed. To sooth it, I stroke my forehead once more.

Heard answered her glare with a cynical smile. His words were, as always, overflowing with himself.

"Hmm… that would be the case for a typical, lowly Demon, correct? What I am trying to say, is that for the ones who are supposed to be leading the great Lord of Acedia's army, it is much too shameful, Lize Bloodcross."

"… Well you sure know how to talk big. Especially when you were the only General

who didn't participate in the battle."

"That's right. I truly never thought the other two would be this useless. The next time a Demon Lord thinks of invading, let's have me go out alone."

Despite his annoyed tone, he gave an immediate reply.

There is not a single hint of jest in Heard's face. An army led by two Generals was easily laid waste to by a single Demon Lord, but in his eyes there is no impatience, no nervousness.
Nothing but elegance. More prideful than all.

Superbia Demons are strong.

In truth, it is said that of the Demons that reach Lord Class, around seventy percent are Pride.
The losers are worse that garbage, the winners equivalent to God. And one's self has long surpassed God.
That is Superbia's Original Sin. Strength in weakness, and weakness in the strong, a highly unstable nature. Even so, they are called the strongest of Demons.

All they ever demand for is the result, and the no matter what step of the process resulted in defeat, they'll show contempt.

And just like the other Sins' cravings, the stronger they get, the greater their inclinations.

Of the four surrounding the round table, the last one… having lost a majority of his possessions, and even his army, the greatest victim Deige inspected a beat up Celeste as he spoke up.

"… Even so, Supreme Commander Heard, it's just as that girl Lize's saying. Zebul the Devourer stood top class among Demon Lords, and she had an impossibly large amount of power, you know? Even for someone as prideful as you, Supreme Commander, I'll bet it would prove difficult to『Overrule』her."

"Hmm… by that, are you comparing to the Demon Lords you've served up until now?"

"Ki ki ki, yeah. If you try to find an existence more powerful than that one… I can only think of Boss Leigie, and the Great Demon King."

He responds with a bitter smile.
The words of an old Demon like Deige held some persuasive power.

In the first place, the Devourer Zebul Glaucus ranks right up in my top three for most atrocious Demon Lords I've met. Her magic, and skills, and direction made her an absolute warrior, where normal Demons would fail to even reach her feet. She's a『Gula』so strong that I can't even laugh off the rumors that she ate up the Heavenly Army in the war with the Heavens ten thousand years ago.

If only I had that much power…
Just as sand accompanies time as it falls down the hourglass, I feel something like mud collecting in the depths of my soul.
The weight of it is making me dizzy.

Since reaching General Class, I have never faced defeat once. This war was the first.
Because of my first failure in a long time, I cannot control my impulses.

"Hmm, but I've heard our Lord annihilated her all too easily, did he not?"

"Ki ki ki, well, all I can say is, as expected of Rank Three. Boss Leigie is… a monster. He led the Devouring Lord by the nose the entire battle. I mean, Boss… didn't even move the whole time."

On Deije's words, that Demon Lord's, and Leigie-sama's fight play back in my head.
Yes, Leigie-sama never even stood up… though he did use some skill I've never seen before to teleport.
Heard, with a knowing face… nodded with sharp, prideful eyes.

"… Hmm, Sloth Skills get stronger the less one chooses to move… a very Leigie-sama-esque decision."

"No, I doubt that man was actually thinking about something like that…"

"Would you be kind enough as to tell me what other skills our Head used, Deije?"

How could it be that Heard manages to preserve his pride?
Just by being here, I can easily feel the vast magic power of Leigie, who should be in his private room a long ways away. This amount of power, and its quality is definitely at a stage impossible to reach by a Demon. For the General Class me… if I compare it to Deije and Heard who should be stronger than me, the difference is probably not something as small as ten or twenty fold.

"Ki ki ki, even I don't know all the specifics. I mean, even Libell got eaten up…"

"… So Libell the Pursuer was eaten… I had my eyes on him, but… Hmm."

Heard closed his eyes, as if to say, 'how useless'.

He isn't one to grieve over death. Looking at those eyes, that expression, and that posture, Deije's face doesn't change.
Even if Lize's expression gets clouded over, the face of Deije, who lost his sworn friend Libell Aijens, doesn't change.
This must be the strength of Deije, one who even survived the war with the Heavens.

… Of his strength, I can't help but be jealous.

Deije says Heard Lauder is a dreadful Demon. I wonder if he's looking at something invisible to my eyes.
Among us, I am the youngest Demon. Generally, the older Demons get, the more intense their cravings, and their strength. It's said that Deije experienced the Heavenly War ten thousand years ago, and Heard Lauder is said to be an ancient Demon who was the first to ever follow Leigie-sama's lead.
For me, who was just born a few thousand years ago, it's not a gap in time I can make up for.

… And of that, I can't help but be jealous.

I strongly grasp my shaking arm.
Without responding to Heard's words, Deije returned Celeste to its scabbard, and

inserted it into his treasury space. High level Demon Blades are alive. Trivial scratches and cracks will be autonomously regenerated.

"What I saw was… a Skill to increase gravity, an instantaneous movement Skill… also an unidentified one he used to send Zebul flying."

"… Hmm… he held back quite a bit then."

On Deije's words, Heard knit his brows, and took a deep breath. That was a sort of emotion that would originally never appear on a Pride Demon's face.
He sticks his elbow into the table, and touches his hand to his chin as if lost in a sea of thought. His form, even seen from afar, was so well built that it could be made into a painting as is.
Skillfully folding his six arms, Deije asks with a tone full of doubt.

"Holding back…?"

"… Hm. The Leigie-sama I know's power is not of such small caliber. In the first place, he didn't even use his renowned『Slaughter Dolls』, did he not?"

"Ki ki ki, that's correct. But even if it's Boss, I doubt a Doll'd do the trick. In actuality, the Doll he gave me was ripped apart and eaten."

"… Deije, don't lump that Doll he gave you with the rest. Leigie-sama's original Slaughter Doll is… supreme."

Heard laughs. At Deije. At Lize. At me.
It's probably a fact that only he knows of, having served Leigie-sama for much more time than me.
And Heard spoke up.

"… Even more so than the individual."

"Hah… Having a Doll be stronger than the man himself is impossible, right?"

"… Hm. For a normal Demon, that is."

The Slaughter Doll Skill is one possessed by Demon Lords of Sloth, so there is barely any precident.
But even so, to be able to make an entity with powers surpassing a Demon Lord at will is outside the scope of common sense.

Lize's face looked as if the word 'Lies' had been written on it as she looked at Heard with shock.

Heard Lauder was an honest man. At the very least, while he was prideful, his power was real. He relied not just on skills, but on wisdom, and he definitely possessed true charisma. Otherwise, there was no way he would be able to lead the First Brigade which boasts the largest numbers.

"Ki ki ki, if that's true then it sure is amazing. I'd like another by all means. But, well, even if that's the case… this time's opponent was a Demon Lord on a level where she could even wound Boss, you know? I think it would be a bit much for a Doll without any Original Sin skills."

On those words, Heard opened his eyes wide.
He leans his body forward, and glares at Deije with strong eyes. It was a manifestation of emotion great enough to shake one's soul.

"… That can't be… Leigie-sama was injured… you say!?"

"… Yeah. Well, it was only a little bit of blood, and he healed himself up fast enough."

"… That's enough… I see, so she could injure Leigie the Depraved. Zebul the Devourer… Hm, I see…"

"Was it truly that strange? No matter how strong a Demon Lord he may be, as long as the opponent's one as well, he'll get at least a scratch or two… I mean, soon after he brought me there, he started crying."

On Lize's inquiry, Heard sighed as he leaned back in his chair, before returning to his previous position. As if he was thinking deeply, his attention wandered around the air.

"… Hm, that is a natural occurrence. But still, for one to be able to give Leigie of Sloth even the slightest scratch… it's been two thousand years."

"Two thousand… so two thousand years ago, there was someone who could do it?"

"Yeah… it was even someone you know quite well. But… that doesn't matter."

As if to declare the end of the conversation, Heard stood up.

The oppressing air emanating from his body… Superbia magic started to condense all at once.
His cold eyes lorded over me and Deije. World-eroding powers great enough to freeze over my body.
On the change in the atmosphere, Lize frowned, and after an obvious and blunt scowl, she stood as well. If this had been the moment after her dispatch, she definitely would have gone into a rage. She's learned how to manage her anger as of late, and she rarely burns up rooms these days.

"Wai…"

"… Hm. There was no problem with the final result, but I'll have you pay compensation for your shameful displays. The verdict will come down soon enough. Have fun waiting for it."

"Ki ki ki, please be gentle with me."

"… Hm."

With a loud sound, he shuts the door behind him.
The air returns to normal, and Lize spoke in indignation. A crimson phosphorescence flickers around her red hair.

"Wha, that man… no matter the case, to treat allied troops like that…"

"Ki ki ki, Lize, you sure are young. A prideful commander is pretty much always like that. Rather, the fact that we weren't executed on the spot… means that we've still got a bit of luck left in us."

Deije laughs as he stands.
He's a Demon who's lived a far longer life than me, and his words held a weight backed by experience.
His six eyes watch over me. The emotion held within them was something I was unable to understand.

"Medea, I am… going to withdraw from this army."

In a sense, his words were as I had expected.
Despite his form, Deije's a rational Demon. His cravings, his desire, by the very nature that they're aimed at objects apart from humans, he's much more trustworthy than many other Demons.
Perhaps Lize didn't anticipate it, because as she heard those words, she rose out of her seat once more.

"Wha… Are you serious, Deije?"

"Yeah… if I stay here, Supreme Commander Heard will dispose of me at this rate. Leigie of Sloth's right hand man, prideful and conceited… Ki ki ki, how troublesome."

"How foolish… do you think that Supreme Commander would permit such a thing?"

"Probably. I mean, my Sin is… not something I have to be here of all places to fulfill. I'm not sure about Girly and Heard, though."

An instant decision. Good discernment.
Deije's words were straight to the point. An Avaratia's cravings are something that can be fulfilled no matter what banner they fight under. With Deije's caliber, no matter what Demon Lord he worked under, he would receive a favorable evaluation. He even has a Demon Blade that Zebul praised as dreadful.
The later part was also quite direct.

My desire is…『Invidia』 can only be fulfilled as long as I'm here.

As if my brain was wounded, my head started to hurt.

Deije knows when to pull out. That's exactly why he survived the war with the Heavens. His body that had been trained like steel, his rationality, thought pattern, desire. Ah, all of it… how enviable.

In the ki ki ki I was used to, he laughed.
And he let out some words I had never thought of.

"Ki ki ki, I'll ask you as one who survived the Zebul War alongside me. Just in case. Girly, do you want to leave with me?"

"What… that is…"

"There isn't just one page in the book of desire. Ki ki ki, girly, you're young. Rather than being dealt with by Supreme Commander Heard, you should be able to lead a decent life…"

Lize looks over me and Deije in a panic. Disagreement and discord in a Demon Lord's army fall under her type's jurisdiction. I wonder if the Great Demon King's Wrath will befall her. Even if it isn't her fault individually, it's not like a monster's Wrath has

direction. No she may be scarier than any monster.

"… Let me persuade Heard Lauder. I cannot let the Great Demon Lord's forces be diminished."

"Ki ki ki, I'm grateful for the sentiment, but some things are just impossible. Heard is… stronger than your Wrath. I mean, back when I was just an average run-of-the-mill Demon… he's a Demon who's lived since ancient times. The longer a Superbia lives, the more powerful their『Overrule』gets."

"My orders are the orders of the Great Demon King, and my words are hers. Even so, will he fail to listen?"

"How should I know?"

Deije resigns.

"… But… I have a bad premonition about it. Ki ki ki, it's best if you don't think of him as a normal Demon. This is… some advice from your elder."

I'm honestly thankful for his advice.
 His words are probably true. If I am to stay here, then in the near future, I will be taken care of by Supreme Commander Heard.
 But, still, even so… I have a reason I must remain. No, I should have one.
 I resolve my heart, and look at Deije clearly. While it may have been for a short time, he's a soldier who was able to properly exchange blows with Zebul.

"… Thank you. But my desire… can only be fulfilled here."

"… Ki ki ki, I thought you'd say that. Well, do your best. As a former Supreme Commander, for argument's sake, I'm praying for your survival, girly."

As if to offer a handshake, Deije presented his right center hand.
 It was rugged, and wrapped in muscle. I don't know just how much power he has. But from it, I can feel the accumulation of many years.
 Of that, I'm jealous. Of the building of time.

If you compare a Demon's character to the passing of years, it doesn't change all too much, however this man's personality is much more likeable than Heard's.
 Finally, as if he had suddenly remembered something, Deije asks…

"Girly… come to mention it, there was something I wanted to ask. Do you know of a Demon Lord of『Luxuria』?"

"… Yes. I've met one before."

Since the『Luxuria』Demon Lord was destroyed, it's been over a thousand years.
 But just from meeting her once, the intense Envy I felt for that Lord, makes me remember the scene as if it had happened just yesterday.
 Deije lets out a sigh unfitting of himself.

"… As I thought, you lack sex appeal. There's no way I can steal you away… is it? Well, I'm thankful for that good fortune."

"…"

“Next time, treat me to something nice.”

With those words, I was sure of it.
Ah, this man… he realized it. That I wasn’t a『Luxuria』, but an『Invidia』.

Perhaps it was natural for him to notice. Because before his eyes, I envied Celeste.

But I didn’t let out my words. I’ll bet he thought that our interests wouldn’t clash, but at the same time, perhaps this Demon of Greed was showing some kindness.
No, perhaps it was me that wanted it that way.

And just as Deije said, I envied him.
I became him.

“Ki ki ki, Leigie of Sloth and Depravity… he sure was an interesting Demon Lord. And a terrifying one… I can’t even feel any ambition towards him. Well, next we meet, I’ll pray we’ll be allies.”

Yeah, exactly. I pray we never cross again.
I looked straight at Deije.

“… Right, let’s meet again, 『Avaritia』.”

“Ki ki ki, seeya, 『Luxuria』.”

Part 3: I Want to Become You

Even if reason permits it, feelings aren’t as forgiving.
That is the nature possessed by Demons.

As such, Heard despises because he is Superbia, and Leigie slacks because he is Acedia. Lize angers because she is Wrath, Deije seeks because he is Avaritia, and Zebul eats because she is Gluttony. There is nothing strange about it.

Lorna is Luxuria, so lusting after Leigie-sama wouldn’t be… strange.
And because I am Invidia, I must envy.

I put all my effort into biting down on my lip… the taste of blood spreads out in my mouth. I can feel the irritating smell in the depths of my nose.
A scene I didn’t want to see, words I didn’t want to hear.
Much different from the vivid flames of Wrath, the muddy fire of『Envy』 licks the insides of my head.

『Envy Vision』

A Skill on the Envy Tree. The power to look up the movements of those I’ve envied. It isn’t just scenery, it’s even possible to hear their voices.
As if the scenes were rolling out before my eyes, my vision was clear, and my sense of hearing was filled with Lorna’s tender voice.

It’s not like I feel any carnal desires towards Leigie-sama, I’m simply jealous.

Of Lorna, who lusts towards her own Lord.
Of Deije who follows his desires, and continues to pursue it.
Of Heard, who has enough overflowing confidence to even look down on the Lord of Gluttony.

Up until now, I've only ever used Envy skills within my own room.
My front has always been『Luxuria』.
Gifted with both intelligence and beauty, one who stands at the forefront of the army. A single woman who governs Lust.

I once envied the Demon Lord of Lust, Lilith Luxeliahart, and the skills I got my hands on were well over the skills of most Lust Demons.

As such, I am… Medea Luxeliahart.

My form reflected in the full body mirror was died with the unsightly emotion of Envy, and tears of blood are flowing down my eyes.
My mind is painted black, a clear repulsive emotion.
As opposed to my feelings, I was favorably proceeding down the Envy Skill Tree.

"Haa… haa…"

Even though I haven't moved a single step, my chest feels tight.
The breath I let out is hot, and damp.

I try to recall Deije's words.
As I thought, it's no good. As long as I don't carry out my envy here, I have no future.

Even if I am to be killed by Heard Lauder…

None… can get in the way of my jealousy.
If he comes at me with the intentions of disposing me, I just have to beat him at his own game.

The Avaritia Skills I obtained by Envying Deije.
The Luxuria Skills I obtained by Envying Demon Lord of Lust, Lilith.
The Skills I obtained myself by pursuing Invidia.
The Gula Skills I obtained from Zebul's crushed corpse.

As a General Class, the amount of power I can Envy far exceeds that of Deije's right hand man Libell the Pursuer.
But that is of no importance to me.

My Envy is… what triggered it? The item that was the source of all of this has to be out there somewhere.

I'm envious.
I'm jealous.
I want to… become you.

『Leigie-sama, it's time for your meal. 』

With a gentle expression, Lorna calls out to Leigie.
She's an attendant who has served him for many years. She's the maid who has the

most contact with Leigie-sama, and at the same time, she's the Demon who saved me.
Her appearance, personality, skill, loyalty. Everything about her is envious.

… If only you weren't there, I would be the one in your place.

And again, a black fever scorches in my head.
How, why, in just one step will what I desire fall into my hands?
Who is at fault? What is at fault?

If only I had been able to handle Zebul, if only I racked up some achievements, my daily life should have continued on as it always had, and yet…

But right now, what I have the least of is time. Heard will try to kill me without a doubt. That's the type of Demon he is.
By just envying from afar, I won't make it in time. My life will lose its meaning. I'll lose everything.
The feelings I've tried so hard to restrain up until now have surpassed the extent where I can hold them back with my power.
My arms, my legs, even when it isn't cold, they're shaking.

『Leigie-sama, your hair is disheveled.』

『… I see.』

He was always burrowed into his bed, so there's no way it could be in line.
In a tone as if it were just a pretext, Lorna touches Leigie-sama's jet-black hair. His eyes remain closed, and he doesn't say a word.
The moment she touched it, I saw Lorna's face get dyed a light red.

She hasn't said anything. She hasn't said anything, but I'm jealous.
I heard a rumor on the wind. That Leigie-sama has gotten around to remembering Lorna's name. His ever-so-reserved attendant was likely the cause of him going out a little while ago as well.

… Even though he hasn't remembered my name yet.

It's no good. No good anymore. It's definitely no good.
I take rough breaths as I wipe my eyes with a handkerchief. The white cloth, after being brushed against my eyes only once, changed to a shade of vermillion endlessly close to black.

Ah, you are… my longing.

I understand that it's something without meaning.
But if I… if I was a Demon Lord, I would be able to perfectly imitate Lorna's form!
Those meaningless ambitions swirled around my head.

No matter how many times they turned, there was no signs of the endless stream of tears stopping. The weight of the handkerchief sucking up my envy was abominable.

I have no time. Whether I can win against Heard, honestly I do not know.
Thinking back to Deije's warning, the probability is quite low. He's a man whose nature I do not fully understand. I'm not sure whether he's hiding anything or not.
Then before that, I'll fulfill my desire.

I give up on wiping the tears.
I unlock the door, and leave the room.
My legs shake, and I put my hand on the wall to steady myself, as I head towards Leigie-sama's room. On the way, I passed by one of my subordinates.
She tried to call out greetings to me, but seeing my face, she open her eyes wide with a shocked expression.

There's no need for you to worry about it. My cravings aren't pointed at you.

Trying to convey that, I attempted to force a smile onto my face, but seeing that, her face turned pale, and she fled.

(TL: The gender given to the subordinate here is vague, so it can be either male or female)

Ah… if I was able to smile like Lorna, she wouldn't have run, right?

But that is also a trivial matter.
Before, I had all the time in the world, but until time started running out, I was unable to strengthen my Envy. I am an unsightly Demon, without a doubt.
There are plenty of Demons who have given up on their cravings, but having once tasted being a Minus, I am unable to resign myself.
I grit my teeth.

"It's no good, definitely…"

"Kusu kusu kusu… what's no good?"

I was supposed to be talking to myself there.
From around the turn of the passage, a single shadow showed itself.
Golden hair, blue eyes. A Demon wearing a maid outfit equipped with a skirt shorter than Lorna's.
Hiero. Lorna's sister. Number two of the house in service to Leigie-sama.
She gives an irritating laugh. While she has an appearance similar to Lorna's, she wears a different atmosphere.

At the same time, she's a Superbia Demon like Heard, but she's a a special one who doesn't go out in battle.
Why must pride raise such irritating voices? Her expression, tone, every part of her got on my nerves.

"I was driven away by oneechan, but in exchange, I've found something quite interesting."

"…I have no business with you."

"Kusu kusu kusu, Medea-san, your act is slipping off, you know?"

On her words, I suddenly noticed.
The imitation『Luxuria』aura I always wore with a skill had been released.
I take deep breaths, and re-cloak myself in Lust.

With interested eyes, she looked over me.

"… I see, I had always been thinking it. No matter the case, your impression was too light for Lust. Kusu kusu kusu…"

Like I care.
I have no need to conceal it any further. In the first place, I have no interest in someone like Hiero.
From the start, the one I wanted to hide myself from… was Leigie alone.

Hiero takes out a handkerchief to wipe my eyes, and looking at the black cloth, she smiled brightly.
Without caring about dirtying herself, she put the handkerchief into her pocket.

"And what do you plan to do? Looking like that?"

"… As if you have to know."

"Kusu kusu kusu, you're no fun. I wonder what I should do… if I stopped you, would oneechan praise me?"

This one… does she want to fight?
Against a General like me?
It's true that Envy Skills don't have high attack power at all. But I have all the Skills I've Envied so far.
I'll likely win. I'm not as weak as to lose to some normal mediocre Demon.

But even when on the receiving end of my bloodlust, Hiero smiled with an innocent face.

"… It's a joke. A joke! Please don't make such a dangerous face for a simple joke. Kusu kusu, fine, I'll let you pass. Oneechan is… still in the room, but she should leave soon enough. Good grief, she loves to take her time…"

"… What's your goal?"

I cannot understand what this girl is thinking.
She hasn't lived that long, and she shouldn't have proceeded that far down the Pride Tree, but from her expression, while it may be a different type, I perceive a pride like Heard's.
Not that she's making fun of me, but that she's looking down on me by nature.
And her exprecion held an unfitting amount of wisdom.

"Nothing really~? I don't have a goal. I mean Medea-san's going to be killed soon so I thought that at the very least, I would let you accomplish your desires is all."

Hey, don't you think so as well, Medea-san?

Hiero raises her voice and laughs.
There's a throbbing pain in my head. The Flame of Envy I was supposed to have restrained is raging up.

"Well, I think you can just do whatever you want. Leigie-sama… kusu kusu, won't try to stop you, let alone mind."

"…"

It’s no good, I have no time.
How much time would it take to annihilate this one? A minute? Ten? Or perhaps even more?
I have no time to care about Hiero.

Once she opens the way, I turn my eyes to her just once more, before directing them back ahead.
Blood drips, staining the carpet.

“Kusu kusu. Ah, if you end up killing oneechan, please tell me, ‘kay? It’s my turn next.”

“…”

I can’t deal with her.
Even after Hiero left, her annoying laugh resounded in my ears.
What’s so strange? What’s so funny?

… None of that matters.

I only have one regret left here.

Leigie-sama’s room comes into sight. Lorna has already left it.
From the start, I never had any plans of killing her. I’m not sure what would happen if she got in my way, but she’s a lot busier than an average soldier, and she’s always humble when in front of Leigie-sama’s eyes. Even when she’s so surprisingly intense at night.

I knock the large door once, before slowly opening it.
From what I can see with my eyes, Leigie-sama’s room is, after having been burned through by Lize-san a couple of times, different than the one I entered long ago, but the atmosphere I felt was identical.
Incomparable to Envy or Greed or Wrath or Gluttony, an intense air of Acedia.

“Pardon… the intrusion… Leigie-sama.”

On my voice, Leigie-sama won’t raise an answer. I knew that from the start.
I lock the door behind my back, and approach the bed Leigie-sama was buried in.
As if he had died, his eyes were lightly shut. His countenance was such that not a single expression lingered on his face, and I couldn’t determine whether or not he was awake.
Even when he’s before my eyes, I don’t particularly feel anything. The King of Sloth without a single thing for me to Envy. Just like a sculpture… no more than that, like a corpse, the King of Depravity didn’t stir in the slightest.

When I’m envious of everything I am unable to get my hands on, I can’t find a single thing in Leigie-sama to be jealous of.
It’s natural. What I was jealous of wasn’t Leigie-sama himself, but of his surroundings.

I move the palm of my hand to Leigie-sama’s face. He’s alive.
My unsightly tears of blood drip down, and stain that face.

“Leigie-sama… just what… should I long for… Why can I never be satisfied…”

"…"

Leigie-sama lightly opens his eyes, and his transparent gaze, without a hint of conceit, looks through me.
But he doesn't say anything. That was excessively disheartening.

There is but a single clue.
In all that I've perceived, within my memory, Lorna is the one I hold the most Envy towards.

… That's why if I'm able to accomplish something Lorna cannot, my jealousy should clear up a little.

"Leigie-sama… do you remember my name?"

"… Yeah."

"Eh? Really!? Is it alright if I ask you to say it?"

"…"

His eyes asked the question, 'who is this?'

… Just what instincts does Leigie-sama live on?
Even looking at my streaming tears of blood, even when his face is stained, he doesn't stir in the slightest. I am unable to move Leigie-sama's heart.
It's something I already knew, long ago.

I lift the hem of my robe, and give a polite curtsy.

Then in the end, I'll adorn myself with a impression of perfect beauty.

"Leigie-sama… I'm called Medea Luxeliahart. The Sin I govern is『Luxuria』. It is a pleasure to be in your service."

"… I see."

He let out a gloomy voice.

My soul core is beating noisily.
But this is strange. Even when before the man himself, my Envy isn't satisfied in the slightest. I am… just what am I overlooking?
Whatever the case, I have no time.

"Leigie-sama…"

I untie the ribbon holding the robe closed at the neck, and leave the red strip on the side table.
One by one, the wooden buttons are unfastened by my shaking hands.
I withdraw my arms, and the robe falls to my feet. My bare shoulders feel a pleasant cool sensation upon coming into contact with the air.
All that's protecting my body is a light one-piece, and the underwear I'm wearing underneath. I'm not even wearing my military uniform. There's nothing to protect me.
It's not like when Zebul stripped it all. The act of taking it off by myself is much more embarrassing than I had anticipated. Demons of Lust sure are amazing.

My lips quiver. In a shaking voice, I declare to Leigie-sama.

"… Henceforth… I will be violating you."

"… I see."

"… Meaning, I will be completely ignoring your will, and forcefully committing sexual acts with you."

"… I see."

Even after embarrassingly declaring that much, the expression on Leigie-sama's face hasn't changed in the slightest, and his eyebrows don't even shift a millimeter.
There isn't a trace of human emotion. No shyness or fear. While yawning, his absentmindedly-shifting gaze makes it so I'm not even sure if he's looking at me.

As I confirmed that the flow of my tears had become stronger, my shaking hands moved to remove the top-most button on the one-piece.

Part 4: This Is Too Much…

Even after giving up my body and feelings, my feelings of envy barely subsided at all. That was probably the portion of my envy that had been directed at Lorna.
The large Hell that formed the base wasn't filled in at all.
My feeling of impatience isn't lessening at all. In a daze, I cleaned myself up, and nimbly put on the clothing I had discarded.

"Thank you… for your time…"

"…"

Leigie-sama shows not an iota of movement. Even during the act, he barely moved at all.
Even when I deeply lower my head, he doesn't give an answer. His eyes remained closed. I was on the verge of tears.
Does this Demon Lord even have any sexual desire? No, I'll bet he does.
I mean, that's why we were able to do it in the first place.

The King of Idleness.

Experiencing his abnormal way of life once more, I felt an extreme feeling of loss and despair. I can't even raise a hollowed out laugh.

But if this isn't it, then what could be the source of the Envy I obtained?

I had always thought it stemmed from the yearning I had towards Leigie-sama. The Luxuria I obtained through my Envy was in order to catch Leigie-sama's eye, and that's why I always feigned being one.

This can't be. I can't follow this anymore.
I cannot find the target of my Envy. It must have been something that birthed emotions great enough to awaken me to my Sin.

What should I do from now on?
My swaying field of vision. Without my thoughts coming into order, my uncertain feet headed for the door.
I undo the lock, and open it.

"… Hm. Are you done yet?"

"… Ah… I see…"

That voice enlightened me.

… So I'm already out of time.

Leaning his body on the wall outside, was a black haired man glaring at me.

Supreme Commander, Heard Lauder.
Leigie's top follower.

At the same time I reached enlightenment, an intense anger stained the scene before me in red.

… So be it. If you'll get in my way, then seeing whether or not your『Superbia』is stronger than my『Invidia』isn't a bad option.
I've lost the trail I had been following for years, and I'm in the mood to take my anger out on someone.
I get by breathing in order.

"Kusu kusu, Medea-san, did you fulfill your desire?"

Next to him stands Hiero. With a tasteless full smile, she looked down on me.

It's not fulfilled. There's no way it could be fulfilled.
I still have regret remaining. No, my regret has only gotten deeper.

I lick my lips. Luckily, my tears had already stopped. Well, there's no doubt I'm making a terrible expression right now.

I straighten my shaking legs.

I raise my eyes to see the Demon of Pride, two heads taller than me.
Of course, I'm not being negligent, but Pride Demons generally don't initiate surprise attacks. Even more so when the enemy is of lower status.
Just in case, I confirm it one last time.

"Heard Lauder… do you plan on fighting me…?"

"… To direct killing intent at me, you've grown up admirably, have you not. Fight? Wrong, this is simple… judgement."

The same intolerable tone as ever.
But there, Heard seemed to suddenly remember something.

"… Hm, but you have accomplished the meritorious deed of troubling Leigie-sama, and thus weakening him."

"… What? What are you…"

Weakening… Leigie-sama?
Meritorious?

This man… what is he…
Deije's lines revive in my mind.
A bad premonition. Right, that's what he said.

The pressure I can feel just by him standing there. The feeling of oppression.
A great pressure as if the air itself was being crushed, no different from when Zebul stood before my eyes.

Supreme Commander Heard Lauder's supposed to be the strongest Demon in the Army next to Leigie. But did he always have this extent of power, this air about him?

The Prideful Kaiser.
In the past, he supported this army alone, the greatest veteran. This army's dictator.
With eyes as if he was observing a stone on the side of the road, Heard inspected my whole body.

"… Right, this is an exception. In accordance to your achievements, and as mercy towards a former comrade, I don't mind keeping you around for the army's relaxation use."

"What…?"

"Kusu kusu kusu, isn't that nice, Medea-san? To get away without dying. Kusu kusu, isn't this your long-cherished ambition as a『Luxuria』?"

Hiero laughs annoyingly.

Ah, this is no good.
Even if I'm not Wrath, I feel a great need to kill this one.

Strange? Sense of discomfort? Strong?

I know all of that.
But if I stayed silent here after all this, I would be a failure as a Demon.
Even if I don't govern Superbia, I have my pride.
Even if I don't govern Wrath, there are things that make me angry.

Right now,『Envy』isn't even coming to mind.

"… Heard, I am thankful to you. Back when I was just a normal Demon, you gave me a job."

"… Hm, I need no thanks. All I care about is the result."

And he laughed scornfully, as if to say, 'And you didn't even bring about any results.'

But even if his eyes shined with pride, he wasn't negligent.
To eliminate even the million to one chance of him slipping, to protect his pride, he performed all of his abnormal training.
That is the nature of the one who continues to reign over Pride, Heard Lauder.
As such, he has always shined as the Supreme Commander of Leigie-sama's forces.

From the depths of his existence, magic, desire is drawn out.
It's been about three days since the end of the Zebul War. Physical state aside, my magic is in perfect condition.

"… Should we change locations?"

He probably knew I wasn't expecting a yes.
With an uninterested expression, exactly like Leigie's, he looked down on me.

"Location… Hm, there's no need. No, more so, doing it here saves some effort."

"… Meaning?"

"No, I was talking to myself there… Now, Medea Luxeliahart. Come at me."

Hiero quietly moves herself to the side.
Heard seems quite relaxed. Without a sign of him having entered a battle stance, his face continued to lord over and despise everything equally.

I'm being taken lightly.

… Fine. I'll call your bet.

Without letting my guard down, and paying attention to Heard's movements, I took in a deep breath…

…I used the『Imitate』skill.

My thoughts flash like lightning, and race around my body.
What floats in my mind is a green-haired girl. Alone, she led her army, and turned her blade to the Great Demon King; a powerful Demon Lord.
The flames of Envy burn up before my eyes.

Without restraint, I expend the pool of magic I had been saving up.
My knees shake. My body falls backward for a moment. It's a frightening Mana cost. The amount even exceeded that used up by the SS Skill of the Demon Lord of Lust, 『Phantom Aliquot Dance』.
It was a true Demon Lord's Skil.
Originally, it's the summit reached only by Demons who have put thousands and thousands of years into fulfilling their cravings.

I Envied that. Without any respect or honor.

Something weighs down on my hand.

It's an『Invidia』Skill to perfectly preserve the Skills of those I've Envied.

『Imitate』.

Just like『Avaritia』's『Skill Ruler』, it skips the experience required to achieve it, a means reserved to Envy.
Unlike with『Skill Ruler』, where you can strengthen gained skills, with『Imitate』you can use the Skills in the state from which they were imitated.
The same level at which the real one used it.

『Fang of Origin』

It was the skill she used in the battle with Leigie-sama.
A curved pure white crescent-moon-shaped blade manifested before me, before being clad in the black mists of hunger.

Heard frowned. But even after seeing me use a Skill that clearly wasn't Lust, he wasn't shocked.
I'll bet Hiero told him. By nature, Demons who govern Pride have an absolute hierarchical system among them.
I had forgotten. No, I didn't connect it. The Supreme Commander, and the maid apprentice.
But that doesn't really matter. That won't do anything to break a Demon Lord's Skills.

"That is… Hm, Zebul the Devourer… a Gula Skill, is it?"

"…"

Pressure. Frightening starvation. The blade sucks up my nutrients, and my vision grows hazy. My footing becomes unsteady.
Completely ignoring that, I lowered my body to the ground, and kicked the floor.The tip of the sword grazed the floor as it made a vacuum with its swing.
It was something even Leigie-sama had to dodge. The skill Zebul selected from her eternity of life specifically to eliminate the Lord of Sloth.

In just a single step, I close in on him, and swing upwards.

Heard, seeing that attack, smiled with obvious disdain.

Vibrations as if the building was shaking. The floor gives in. The moment before the blade was able to eat into him, his form vanished.
The fang easily pierces through the wall protected by a barrier.

"… Hm, as I thought… how useless."

From behind, I heard a voice. When I hurriedly turned around, my flank was struck. Befrore I could even feel any pain, my vision was buried in a wall.
Pain. An impact that shook my entire body. Judgement. A decrease in my ability to sustain life. The sharp pain in my flank. A few of my bones are gone.
The back of my head is being pressed hard.

"Even if you have a Demon Lord's skills, a measly Invidia would never be able to master them."

The right arm holding the sword was crushed. My hand is forcefully opened. The fang turns to sand, and fades.
It wasn't that absurd teleportation that Leigie-sama displayed. It was pure movement based on his physical ability. It was just simple speed, but to my level of dynamic vision, it was no different than instantaneous.

The idle Leigie.
The Dynamic Heard.

What physical strength. His sense of battle without a moment's hesitation. My head is removed from the wall before it is rocked by another impact.

A thunderous roar. My semisircular canals are shaking. I can't even tell what happened, but I do know that damage is piling up on my body.
My vision is tinted red.

"…Hm, as I thought, you're just a lowly『Invidia』… Just what part of this one caught Deije's eyes… I cannot comprehend."

"… Dei…je…"

On those words, that name, my hazy conscience responded.
I instinctively activate『Imitate』. The target is a Demon of『Avaritia』. The Usurper, Deije Breindac.
I'm jealous. I can't help but be jealous.
Of his physical ability.

Power returns to my powerless arms. Red hot blood. The experience of Deije, who exchanged blows with a Demon Lord.
I grab Heard's hand, which had grabbed me by the scruff of my neck. To the limit of my power. I try to crush it.
But Heard's hand doesn't waver in the slightest.

"… So that's Deije's brute strength… hm, it's a waste to have been lent to someone like you."

My body floats. By the time I noticed it, I had been singlehandedly thrown.
My head experiences a shock. But that's instantly dealt with using my Status Abnormality Resistance. My dynamic vision perfectly capture the wall closing in on me. But I'm unable to do anything.
I protect my head before I crash. It's an impact that cuts through my body. Perhaps due to Deije's durability, I don't particularly take too much damage.
The Demon of Pride started approaching me as if he was taking a leisure stroll.

"Hm… not bad.『Invidia』, I will permit you to envy Leigie-sama."

"… What are…"

A warped smile floats on Heard's mouth.

"You envied him, right? As you swung your hips above him. Hm, I'm telling you to go use that, fool."

This man… just how much will he make a fool of me?

The amount of rage I feel is dyeing my head red.
Suddenly, Deije's words revive again.

『Well, do your best. As a former Supreme Commander, for argument's sake, I'm praying for your survival, girly. 』

Right, no matter what, I need to stay alive.

… To fulfill my desire.

I stop imitating his physical ability.
Power drains out of my body. But I at least have enough strength to stand. And I use

my magic again.

Me small consolation was that I was unable to fully manifest the『Fang of Origin』, so I still have some magic.

I lick my lips. Don't look down on Envy. I yearn for everything, desire for it, even if I am unable to change myself, I Envy.

"… Then I'll show it to you. The power of the Lord of Sloth!"

What I imagine is my lord. Always in the bed, on the floor, on the rough ground of the desert, Always sprawled out with a pained expression on his face, lazily lowering his hand as if to squash a fly. The lone King of Sloth. The Needless King.

Think.
Of his power. Of his way of life.

… And I envied that Skill.

I lightly swung my hand.
Heard's body was suddenly thrown against the wall.
As if he had been crushed by my hand.

How should I put this…what an idle Skill.
Upon the lack of any resistance I felt, I looked at my own hand in amazement.
Good grief, there isn't a single feeling on my hand. All I did was wave it. With a loud sound, cracks spread across the barrier-protected wall.
Without thinking anything, I clenched my hand.
Just with that, wrinkles spread across Heard's black clothing as if it had been gripped.

『Miracle Wonder Lighthand』

That was the Skill's name. The name of the Skill I learned through Leigie.
While it may be miraculous, or wonderful, I think there's something wrong with that name. But it's definitely strong. One-sidedly strong.
On top of having almost no demerits, you can one-sidedly attack over a distance.

But even after taking the skill that was enough to slaughter Zebul, the Demon of Pride doesn't seem panicked.

"『Sky Hand』, is it… how useless."

Even while being ensnared, Heard looks down on me.

At that moment, the skill was forcibly cancelled.
His floating body falls, and he lands gracefully on his feet. His body and expression haven't taken damage.

He smooths out his wrinkled clothes with his hand. With a bored look.
I can't believe it… what did he do? He cancelled out a skill from the Lazy King?
No, that's not it. I can kinda understand what he did.

Heard Lauder is a Demon of Pride.
That being the case, there is but a single answer I can reach.

This is『Superbia』's『Overrule』Skill.

I determined it had crossed over the depths of my heart… It has the ability to nullify Overruled Skills, and to bring about absolute status adjustment to Overruled opponents. One of the abilities of Pride.

But that cannot be. Even if he can Overrule most skills, this isn't normal.

"That can't… how were you able to do that to Leigie-sama's…"

"… Hm, pointless. Invidia, I asked you you to use it, did I not? I asked you to imitate it, did I not? Leigie of Sloth's…"

He hesitates for a moment.
He pushes the sole of his foot into the ground, and attacks by lowering his other raised leg.
Even if I noticed, even if I knew, it was a lightning fast speed I couldn't react to.
My body slams into the ground.
His immense power makes me unable to believe he's of the same General Class.
His shoe, probably made of Dragon Leather grinds into my head as if he was treading over trash.
Even without looking, I can tell. His cold stare like a slap to the face. His piercing sharp, honed fighting spirit.
Heard Loader spoke as if spitting out his words.

"…『VIT』."

There was power imbued in his words. I understood.

This one's… on another level.

Even after having lived long years, there are plenty of Demons who don't hold considerable power. I've seen more than enough of them. But this one's different.
I don't know how old he is, but his battle experience, magic, authority, all of it numbered close to the time he spent living.
Why, how. Why has a Pride Demon of this rank resigned himself to be the subordinate of a Demon Lord?

… I can't win.

I barely move my head that was being trampled, and looked up a Heard.

"You… what… are you trying to do!?"

"… I told you to『Imitate』. I did not tell you to open your mouth."

After lifting his leg in an instant, it came down, and crushed my jaw.
Sharp pain. Blood spreads across my mouth, and the hard item I can barely feel is probably my teeth, or bone. My blood spreads across the ground, but for some reason, my vision became strangely clear.
Within my hazy conscious, my thoughts cannot keep up.
My sight is tinted a light black. Someone is looking down over me.

"… Kusu kusu kusu… Heard-san, this child's lost consciousness, it seems."

"… Hm… well it was my mistake to place expectations on her, I guess. If she could only reproduce a fraction of Leigie-sama's power, it would still be fine… is what it means."

"… Well I guess that's that. Kusu kusu kusu, in the first place, this one was said to be the weakest among the commanding officers."

I can't hear anything. I can't see anything.
I feel my Soul Core rapidly losing power.
I've taken too much damage. I used too many skills that were too much for me.
And still, I wasn't a match.

My vision darkens. I can't see anything. I can't feel anything.
At that time, a clear image flooded into my mind.
It wasn't of the few thousand years I spent alive.
It was of Leigie-sama hugging me in place of his pillow, and bringing me here.
That sensation was vivid. His bored expression. His arms, from which I couldn't even sense warmth. With his eyes still closed, an unmoving Leigie-sama.
Leigie-sama roughly spreading me over the bed. Kanon-sama frowning upon finding me.
Leigie comparing options with sleepy eyes. It was the first time anxiety had been born into my heart.

Leigie-sama let go of me.

And what he held instead was…

An impact jolts my head. I don't really care that I was on the brink of death.
I'm not sure by what logic, but color starts returning to my eyes.

N-not even being able to die when killed… this is too much.
Pillow!? … Wai… don't tell me the origin of my…

I unintentionally cried out, but my mouth had been smashed so a strange voice came out.

"Faa… hyo…"

"… Huh? You still have consciousness? Kusu kusu, you're a tough one. There!"

Fingers like whitebait, a pointed hand mercilessly thrusted at both of my eyes.
My eyes are crushed, and my vision becomes pitch black by very physical means. I managed to wring out a scream from my throat. The fingers continue to dig around inside my eyes.
The intense pain makes me really feel me consciousness leaving me this time.

I really don't care anymore. Just kill me already…
My senses are paralyzed. The sensation of the fingers on my eyes. I don't even feel pain anymore. It's just the feeling of movement there was extremely disturbing.
The moment my consciousness was swallowed by darkness again, I heard a faint voice.

"Kusu kusu, Heard-san. You don't need this anymore, right? Can I take it then?"

"… Hm, I don't need it, but… what do you plan to use it for…?"

My body sways. My sensations are out of line.

"This… I think I'll be able to Overrule it. I thought it would be useful for a little『Experiment』…"

"… Hm, so be it. That is but another way for a『Superbia』to advance, but let me just add this. I don't care what you do with it, but make sure you throw it away once you're done."

"Kusu kusu kusu, I know, Heard-san. Please leave the cleanup to me. Heard-san, you have to… Leigie-sama…"

"… Correct. I don't have the time to be wasting on trivial matters… Hm, I've used some time pointlessly. Leigie the Depraved… is it? My father sure has fallen. I'll make sure to make a final greeting."

I'm fading, but I can still feel a faint beat in my Soul Core.

More importantly…
The words I was barely able to pick up from Heard pique my curiosity.
As I lose focus on my own conscious, my mind falls to hell.
I frantically regain focus.

Fa…ther? What does that mean?
Heard Lauder's father is Leigie-sama?

First I've heard of it. I've been here for a while, but I've never heard of something like that. Not even a rumor.
Something is wrong. Letting Heard go like that is wrong.
But I cannot move my body. My consciousness either.
My life flashing before my eyes increases my heart rate, and my mind resurface, but I'm at my limit.

My arms won't even twitch. It's like the unmoving feeling was all I could feel.
It felt as if I had lingering regrets.

"Haa… oneechan's the same, but Medea-san, you're too durable… Do you really have that many regrets in life? Kusu kusu, really Lust and Envy are too sturdy… But Leigie-sama's another story…"

Impacts shake my whole body, and my breath stopped instantly.
Before that happened, a dim light had returned to my eyes.
What was in front of me was the form of Hiero pouring the contents of a small glass bottle.
Drops of water flow down my face. The intense pain that followed my sudden revival made me try to cry out, but Hiero stuffed a shoe in my mouth.

"Goh…!"

"Well, well, don't trouble me so much, Medea-san. Kusu kusu, if Heard-san finds out, he'll kill us all together, won't he? Can't you be quiet for a while?"

As if something was interesting, she smiled as she moved the shoe around again and again, before finally removing it.

After that, she fished another glass bottle out of her pocket.
That marketing logo on the bottle… it's a Potion made to restore lifeforms. It's something I have familiarity with seeing lined up in the army's storerooms.
After removing the cap, she starts sprinkling it on me from a needlessly high altitude.
Potions are a super high class commodity. They're a miracle medicine that can even regenerate lost body parts.
Normally, one doesn't have the leisure to take one out in battle, so it's something that's saved for emergency situations, when they're really needed.
A potions effects include softening pain. My crushed jaw is repaired.

"Arara, so even two wasn't enough. Your HP must be really high… want a third one…?"

"I-I don't need one… I'm fine already!"

"Kusu kusu, don't be reckless. See, see."

"Gu…"

Her foot tread over my ribs.
There's pain as if something was broken inside of my stomach.
I can't even tell what's going on anymore. Is she trying to harass me, or is she healing me?

The second I opened my mouth to complain, a bottle was thrust in.
Liquid flows directly down my throat. When I thought I was about to break out into a coughing fit, her hand forcefully closed my mouth.
From my nose, potion flows. Seeing that, she gives a light and refined smile.

"Goho, goho, w-what are you scheming?"

"Hmm? Scheme? I just saved you, so I think there's something you should say first, right?"

What an irritating phrasing.
But… saved?
I hurriedly observe the surroundings. The crack in the wall, and the collapsed floor. My location hasn't changed at all from the moment I lost consciousness.
I feel cheated for some reason.

"Now, now Medea… wheres~ your~ thanks~?"

She speaks with a sparkling smile.
I grit my teeth.

"… Thank you. I was saved."

"Kusu kusu, my pleasure. From now on, you should learn your place, and know when to run, you know? There's no way you'd ever be able to beat Heard-san, Medea-san. In the first place, 『Superbia』 has a strong affinity against 『Invidia』."

She strokes my hair as if patting a dog.
It irritates me, but the fact that I still have my life is lucky.
More importantly, my feelings of questioning how and why are stronger.

Having received my glance, Hiero lets out a sigh.
The passageway… she looked around the corner of the passage that led to Leigie-sama's room, and looked down on me with philanthropic eyes.

"No… isn't there the possibility that Leigie-sama will ask to embrace Medea-san again? Only in the realm of great possibilities, in the million to one area, though… kusu kusu…"

I… I cannot comprehend.
It's too unfamiliar to me. How does that Lorna have a sister like this?

I don't get the meaning. I cannot comprehend.
Heard's power was frightening, but so is Hiero's mentality.

For that reason… she didn't even change locations, but healed me as I was?
If Heard returned, what did you plan on doing?

My thoughts swirl. Her over-the top reason made it so I could only return a sentence.

"… I don't think that'll ever happen."

"I'm of the same opinion. I mean, your body is so scarce… if it was oneechan, I would understand, though…"

Are you picking a fight?

"No, but, if Leigie-sama ever invites you to his bed, you'll respond, right? Try saying it. I was saved by Hiero of『Superbia』, so please relish in my scarce body."

It's something with an almost one hundred percent chance of never happening, but I resolved myself to never use that line if such an opportunity did arise.
This isn't about having my life saved or anything, I just won't.

"Kusu kusu kusu, well, let's leave the jokes around here…"

… So that was a joke.
She's always smiling, so I can never tell whether she's being sincere or messing around.
With a serious expression, Hiero looked at the passageway. A fleeting glance as if to indicate Leigie-sama's room.

"Heard-san intends on killing Leigie-sama. He'll aim for the gap where he's been weakened from fighting the Demon Lord."

"… Hah? Wha, why… no, that's wrong… I see."

That's not sane.
Even if he just defeated a Demon Lord, Leigie-sama barely got any wounds, and he barely used any Skills. He doesn't seem weakened at all. No, he's sleeping, so it's not like I can tell, but…

Even so, if Heard intends to kill him… he must have some sort of plan.
In the first place, killing one's master is one form of Pride.
If that's the meaning behind Heard's incomprehensible words, then I can understand.

Continuing on, after a large stretch, Hiero let out a sigh.
Her eyes filled with annoyance were tinted with a color unbecoming of her young appearance.

"I've made a bet with myself, you see. I'm definitely a Pride Demon like him, but unrelated to that, I bet that Heard-san will lose. Well, it's just instinct, so if Heard-san does attain victory, then I'll slay Medea-san right here. Kusu kusu kusu… in truth, I'm a strong ally to have you know."

"… I see."

This one is no good. She's natural trash.
But her saving my life is also a fact. I decided not to voice my opinion.
I stand up, and move my body. My magic is pretty much empty, but the pain is gone.
My wounds have been completely healed.

"… Then why did you fully heal me? You could just make it so I barely survived, or something…"

Even if she didn't restore my Mana, there should be a difference in ability between me and Hiero.
If she fully heals me, the possibility that I would run away would be high.
On my question, Hiero threw out a carefree answer.

"… That~ is~ because eight out of nine times, Leigie-sama will win! Heard-san definitely is absurdly strong, but… Leigie-sama's power is incomprehensible. Pride is extraordinarily weak towards the unknown…if his opponent was weakened, he might be able to pull through, but Leigie-sama is Demon Lord Rank Three. It would be the end once he unraveled a skill he'd never displayed before, wouldn't it? Definitely."

Again, those admirably bitter words. But as a Pride like him, her words held some persuasive power.
I was crushed to death with worry, and alongside Hiero, I looked over the corner.

… Pillow, desire, what should I do.

Chapter 7: Superbia's Pride

Part 1: To the Supreme Demon Lord

When compared to the human race, a Demon's life is horribly long.

Their lifespans equate to eternity, and aging from the passage of time is a concept foreign to them.
The shape of their soul, the shape of their will, and the shape of their desires is what resolves their being, and seeds of that resolute way of being are the greatest factors that influence this absurdly large Demon World.
At the same time, as Demons continue to utilize their endless lives to delve into their desires, their power can grow with no limit in sight… once they become Demon Lords, they have enough strength to defile the very Heavens that would once be their natural enemy.

The first thing that entered my eyes the moment I was awakened, was a vigor-less man in slovenly garb. His artlessly cut hair fell over dirty clothing stained with dust. Supporting his body was a creaking armchair of faded color.
No life, energy or will, but what he did have was a vast amount of power.

Even for my immature senses, I could feel it fill the world, simple deep and dark, as if it were the air, a natural and quiet magic.

… The King of Depravity.

Survival of the fittest. In a world where Demon Lords elegantly competed with one another, there existed but one who did not interfere, and just by being there, he had climbed the ranks to Demon Lord. A mighty Demon.
Without making any blood flow, a pitiful Demon who had even been left behind by the flow of time.

Leigie the『Depraved』.

It wasn't certain that he could grant power to those who desired it.
But the inverse also stood true.
Even if he had power, it wasn't certain if he could put it to practical use, and as Sloth, it wasn't even certain if he could use it at all.

The Demon Lord who pursued『Acedia』looked at me. Without saying anything, without thinking anything.
No, while his eyes were directed in my direction, perhaps he wasn't even looking at me. His hollow and shifting gaze held no meaning, and all I was certain of was that the thoughts that dwelled in those eyes were ones that someone like me wouldn't possibly be able to comprehend.

Perhaps… my origin was a miracle.

As a game, he had tried to use the power he had gotten his hands on for the first time, and for a reason as simple as that, I was born.

Of course, I only realized that after much time had passed… After, without meaning, and never once having been ordered from my birth, I continued to suck up the Mana

the Demon named Leigie emitted unconsciously. After I gained my own self-awareness, and even my own desires.

Even after seeing me start moving without his orders, Leigie didn't say anything.
The reason for my existence, the reason for my birth were something I couldn't understand.
It wasn't even the Demon Lord's will. His goal was only to use his power, and he didn't even hold any interest towards the result.

I simply looked at my master.

Relieving his will of Sloth,
Looking at the pitiful legion of the Demon Lord who had not a single follower,
Who didn't even eat food, and who simply moved back and forth between a squalid chair he arbitrarily picked up somewhere and a damp bed. I looked at the form of my lord.
Even so, any and all sorts of Heroes, Sages, Demons, Angels, and even Demon Lords didn't pique his interest when they came for him. Looking at his way of life…

"… Hm… so this is how a『Ruler』should be…"

Even now, I can remember it clearly.
That was, those were the first words I ever vocalized.

How useless. How pointless.
Without any goal, his long life of nothingness merely built unto itself, and changed into a massive power.
Just how unsightly, how unbearable.

That was the Longing I governed.
As such, I gained the Original Sin of『Superbia』.
My deplorable creator's form and the form of the growing number of challengers that faced defeat by his hand, had long surpassed any comedy.

And at the same time, I harbored an intense jealousy.

His massive power that grew in proportion to the flow of time was never even polished with any form of training, but the other seeds… the other Demon Lords were simply driven away with overwhelming might.

That power alone was suited to my creator, and at the same time, if I could『Overrule』it, I wondered if I would truly become the supreme being, able to stand above not only people, but everything in existence.

That's what I thought.
That's what I couldn't help but think.

There is no ranks among power.

But even in my mostly-stagnant head, I felt it. His power higher and nobler than all.

At the rate I was going, I knew I would never surpass it.

I gained life as a Demon. Having spent a lifetime longer than I could even imagine, the being that reached Demon Lord level was, lifestyle aside, too strong.

I can『Overrule』. Those slovenly gestures, personality, and a way unbefitting a supreme ruler, it was easy enough to think of them as below me.
But I couldn't win. It wasn't on a level where good affinity or anything mattered, but a gap in life, experience, even existence.
Overruling can increase battle ability, and bring about enough power to overturn the gap between the Demon Ranks『General』and『Lord』. It's a superior skill, but even that wasn't enough
I understood by instinct. The insurmountable gap was simply so great, I couldn't help but understand by instinct.

… Not yet.

Even while watching me look down on him, the Lord of Sloth doesn't say anything. It's always silent.

"… Hm. But if my master is like this, then people will start to see me as the same."

"… I see."

The Lazy King let out a bored voice from under the covers. He displays not the tone variation of emotion.
His eyes look up at me, but even now, he holds not the slightest will.

I declare. It is all for my own sake.
It was also like an oath. In order to carve my existence into the world.

"Nominally and virtually, I shall make Father into the Supreme Demon Lord."

"… Do not want."

"… Hm, I'll have you become one, Lazy King. Of all else, for… my sake."

"… I see."

Just do whatever you want.
Without letting out his voice, the Lazy King mouthed those words, before he sunk into his covers with sluggish movements.

I was always watching. From back when I didn't have any decent awareness.
It was his evident reaction.

But so be it.
… As a start, let's subjugate this region.
I suppressed all the foolish Demon who judged, looked down on, and ignored my Master as harmless, all to make this vast land into my exalted master's mausoleum.

And by the time I have Overruled everything, perhaps I'll have become an existence that surpasses even the Demon Lords of this hell.

Part 2: At least leave it Supreme

The Demon World.

Where the strong are respected more than anything, Demons work to fulfill their desires, and Lords fight and steal over the limited resources.

Without any debate, it's all worthless.

Greed
Lust
Wrath
Gluttony
Envy
Pride
And… Sloth.

I have but one goal.

While training, Overruling and struggling, I understood it clearly.

The territory increases. The magic I wear increases. My Pride Tree advances.
As if mowing down grassroots, a simple task.
Demons of course, as well as Heavenly Assassins, and occasionally foolish warriors who come from the outside world to subjugate a Demon Lord.
Everything yielded to me. To my power. And my master's power.

My basic abilities were high from the start.
There's no way that one made by the Lord of Sloth, who's basically just a lump of power, could be weak.
And I repeatedly trained.
I forged my own power. Physical power, magic, wisdom, leadership. To eliminate the million to one chance of me tasting defeat because of some foolish reason.

That was my first goal, and the primary factor that increased my power with Pride at the base.
Other Lords' desires are fragile when compared to my lord's Sloth.

Like a flying arrow, time passed.

Eventually, a castle was made.
Around the house too small to be called a house my Master lived in, ramparts extended for miles.
The tower built in the center pierced even the heavens.
Named the Castle of Shadows, the Lord of Sloth's bedroom boasted an overwhelming width and majesty that surpassed the castles of any kind of Demon Lord.
My Master's castle. I'm not satisfied. If he's the man who will stand over me even if it be temporarily, a castle of this extent isn't enough.

Demons gathered.
The Demons that yielded, the Demons I forced to yield.
I led the useless rabble, and put an army in order. Supreme soldiers that would surpass any Demon Lord's armies.

As time passed, they came to be famous.
Leigie of Sloth's Strongest Legion.

Even if I didn't force them to submit personally, foolish Demons who lowered their

own heads at us gathered.
Their numbers increased, and the army grew. First Brigade, Second Brigade, Third Brigade.
But no matter what Demon came in, none of them could even reach my feet.

Weak. Much too weak.
Even without me『Overruling』them, they had Overruled themselves, and they were all too weak to amount to an enemy of me.

Unlosing and absolute.
I have no losses, and as such, my master has never faced defeat either.
The more I defeated, the higher I rose, the more the years passed, the stronger my power became.

A Pride Demon's strength is proportional to their battle experience.

Strength is the proof of having overcome. To those you've defeated once, you'll never lose again.
The more you learn, the more you understand, the more distant defeat seems.
The more the years go by, the further defeat becomes. No matter how much desire they pile up, I haven't fallen low enough to lose to any young Demon. I accumulate absolute confidence in myself.

… But at the same time, that means I'm granting time to the Lord of Sloth.

Eventually, the Great Demon King came, seeking our surrender.
Unlike the definite gap between Demon and Demon Lord, the Great Demon King is simply the title given to the Demon Lord in possession of the greatest territory.
But the fact that they lead such great forces within this Demon World means they have desires to that great of an extent.

I met him. My Lord did not have to go out.
The Sin this King governed was Pride. A Demon like me with Overruling as his foundation. And at the same time, his goal was subjugating the Demon World. Putting the warring Demon World in order, and leading it, he would take in the world above, and even the Heavens. A man with large ambition unbefitting his level of power.

After seeing him with my own eyes, I concluded. He wasn't anything special.
At the point I met him, I『Overruled』that King. Meaning he was no match for Leigie of Sloth.
It seems it's been a long time since he first came to be, but the King was foolish, and he didn't even reach my level. In the end, he was just a Demon Lord that was slightly competent.

If I make him yield, will my Master's position rise?
It was a useless notion. For a Demon Lord of this level, there's not even any worth in annihilating him.
As A Demon Lord of Pride, if I make him submit, his power level will fall. There's not even any use in taking him into the army…

My Master's depraved state simply continued to deepen.
His authority doesn't grow in the slightest, but his power alone continued to grow, and that form was truly befitting a Lord of all Demons.

I ask him Questions.

He always returns the usual response.
No matter how many years pass, it never changes from those two words.

The Great Demon King requested a meeting with my Master.

And after they met, he lost his power, and the Demon King seat shifted.
It was too great of a gap between him and a fellow Demon Lord. The will of the transcendent being that merely laid around like a rock was incomprehensible to those around him.

The Great Demon King changed. It changed time and again.

In the end, the Demon World never showed signs of unification.
Demon Lords are born, and Demon Lords die.
The names of famous Heroes change, as they continually try and invade the Demon World.
A large-scale invasion was launched by Heaven. A Large majority of the Demons died out.

… But the Castle of Shadows continued to sleep.

My Master continues to live in his slumber. Never moving, and with that, his power continued to grow. To a height no Demon or Demon Lord would ever reach.
At the same time, the one born from him, my power continues to rise. Without me being able to fulfill the long-cherished desire of my Pride.

The Lord of Sloth who can't be scratched at all.
The Doll born from his skill is peerless.

Over months and years, the dolls he made to kill time scattered across the entire Demon World. Without knowing their master's name, those Dolls simply moved across foreign batttlefields.

Leigie the Depraved eventually came to be known as Leigie of the『Slaughterdolls』.
By the merits of the original body.

A clan of Demons in service to my Master sprung up. I can't comprehend them. But let it be so.
For my master, having a clan like that isn't bad. No, it's natural for there to be one.

Inspectors from the Black Order start to be dispatched.
Let it be so. Observe my Master however you like. In the end, people with your lowly level of power won't be able to scratch Leigie the Depraved.

Subordinates die. They die one after another, and our personnel continues to shift.
By a small bit of negligence, the man that was my right hand died. A foolish one. There can be no negligence on the battlefield.
Even without old age, there are many casualties among Demons with the natural instinct for battle.

Demon Lords famed for their strength are done in by other Demon Lords, and the weak climb up the ranks to Lordship.

All that prospers must decay.

Enemies and allies, one after another, faces continue to change. Information about various Demons and Lords flood the library, and a second, and a third library are built.
A majority of them are ones I Overruled long ago, unnecessary documents.

Once a year, the symbol carved on the wall fills the room, and covers the hallways.

I taste the feeling of being a rock.
All that doesn't change is my Master's existence, and the Demon World's pale blue moon.

Even still, I'm no match. I can't see the end.

I selected Demons of Sloth, and launched attacks.
Most of them were normal Demons. They were nothing to talk about. They didn't use any skills worth noting.

No matter how many decades, centuries, millennia pass, another Demon Lord of Sloth doesn't rise.
Are they resting somewhere under the earth somewhere like Leigie the Depraved was?
Or could it be that Sloth Demons are simply not reaching Demon Lord status?
That is left unknown.

Heaps of bodies, streams of blood.
It's become troublesome to even count the number of Demon Corpses that have piled up, but the impact I felt when I first saw Leigie of Sloth never dulls, no matter how much of an eternity goes by.
Inferiority. That is a『Superbia』Demon's greatest enemy.

Even more months pass.
Information gathers. I polish myself. I repel enemy seeds.
By the time I realized it, there was plenty of prey out there, but no one to be my enemy.

As long as there's no one for me to Overrule, Pride's power won't grow. Pride without its foundations is close to worthless.

I had reached the peak. I master my skills, draw my body to the limit, and hone my magic, but my Pride Tree stops one step before reaching Demon Lord Level.
My final and greatest wall. The wall known as Leigie.

… But that ends today.

Medea's disposal did not even pose a warmup, let alone a rehearsal.
In the end, she's just an Invidia, capable of nothing but imitating others.
Trying to imitate my Master's skill was pure stupidity. For a Sloth Skill with low offensive power, it barely has any power once a Greed or Envy Demon takes and uses it.
I sigh. My soul and my gear have been raised to top class. Even the hazy combat experience from the corners of my mind have surely accumulated in a place I don't know about.

I open the door.
Because it was frequently burned up by that lass Kanon's subordinate, the often changing room had been renewed. It gave off a faint lewd smell.

While I knew this beforehand, while he should have sensed my presence already, Father doesn't raise a single word, or stir a single inch.

He slept still as if he were dead.

You sure have fallen… Leigie the Depraved.

You used a skill just to help a single lowly maid.
On top of personally going to battle, you got a scratch from the likes of Zebul.
Moreover, you left yourself to be defiled.
Your recent acts have been much too wretched for my Master.

… No, perhaps it's about time for you.

It really has been a long time. A stupidly long one.
And Father is supposed to have experienced an even longer time alive. Even if I pile up all my experience, I cannot predict them.
Right now, how many are there out there who know the same Demon World as you?

The magic I feel from his body is immense.
Even if you grouped together all the average Demon Lords, they won't be a match. But I had a definite understanding.

… Leigie the Depraved is weakening.
A rare sight in the thousands, tens of thousands of years I've spent with him.

He went against the『Acedia』he governes.

All of it is… as expected.

The more time a『Sloth』spends in sloth, the more powerful they get. Contrarily, the more they decide to move of their own volition, the more their power will drop.

I stand by the bed. On my master's face, with his eyes closed as if he were dead, I see nothing besides nihility.
I take up his limp hand. In his bony fingers in which I can't even feel the T of Training, his white transparent corpse-like skin had light blue blood vessels running across.

"Father… it's been many years, hasn't it."

"…"

Leigie doesn't give a response. But I can tell.
Father isn't sleeping right now. To the Lord of Sloth, whether he be awake or asleep, everything is but an ephemeral dream.
As such, I continued on.

It really was our first conversation in a long time.

You've fallen, in a way appropriate for me to call a disappointment. Leigie-sama likely

has no interest in the reason, though.
In the first place, this was something inevitable since the moment I was born here, long, long ago.
Father is a sharp man. While he governs Sloth, he also has parts in him aside from it.
That is the clear difference between him and other Sloth Demons, and that's likely the main reason Leigie of Sloth was able to live perpetually.

I have much that I want to say, but I don't need words.

Of how I increased his followers, and made them the greatest power in the Great Demon Lord's army.
Of how he foiled countless assassinations from Heaven, and had those assassins fall to Demonhood.
Of how, while still sleeping, he repelled a raid launched by a dozen Human Heroes.
Of how the former Great Demon King's daughter, that little girl who didn't even harbor any desires, Kanon, rose up to be the Great Demon King.

Of how I amassed tens of thousands of deaths, and being separated from the flow of time.
Of how not a single Demon Lord from when I was created still remain.
Of how friends, companions, enemies died, new ones were born, only to die as well.
With no emotion, and ignorant to the passing of time, father was a perfect Depraved King by nature.
And having been born from the Supreme Demon Lord, I can be nothing but the strongest Demon Lord myself.

Next to father, I get down on one knee, and lower my head.
This is resolve. Today, I will become a Demon Lord, and never taste defeat for the rest of my life. No, even if I am to be defeated…

… The kneeling is unnecessary.

But this is the only compensation I can give father as the Prideful Kaiser, Heard Lauder.

"You've done enough. Let me bring an end to it. While this may sound arrogant, I will see to your end personally."

"… I see."

… So at least stay Supreme until you fall, Leigie the Depraved.

Part 3: How Appropriate for the Curtain Call

Sloth Skills boast powers that cover a large amount of ground.
(TL: As in usability, not distance)
But at the same time, it's also said that it's extremely difficult to acquire the sin.
In the first place, as long as they can fulfill their Sin without fighting, the skills they acquire are barely ever fit for battle.

I fill up my body with power. The fact that Leigie had easily destroyed the Gluttony

King only served to raise my power higher.

The legs supporting the large, canopied bed break.
The moment the bed swayed from its lost balance, I let out a rending cry as I thrust forward.
My fist hits Leigie's head oh so easily. The cracking sound of something breaking rings out.
The impact blows away the pillars supporting the canopy, and Leigie's body is sent flying like a scrap of paper.

A thunderous sound.

The entire building shakes greatly. As if the Castle of Shadows was crying out.
The extra strength anti-Lize barrier is broken easily, and even the wall itself is destroyed. What's more, it isn't just one or two walls.
In the opened hole, I see unobstructed darkness. Around Leigie's room, there are no other personal rooms.

I fiddle with the remains of the bed with my feet.
My condition is perfect. There is nothing obstructing me from fulfilling my Pride. The power swelling all over my body is the compilation of all of my own research, as well as the accumulated history I spent with my Master.

I take a deep breath, and exhale it.

I cannot give Sloth time.

I kicked the floor. My speed instantly reached its climax.

Speed faster than anyone.
Strength stronger than anyone.

… In order to fly higher than anyone.

Such is Superbia's Original Sin.

Weapons are unnecessary. My body itself is perfection.
Images stream through my vision at the speed of sound.
It didn't even take a second for me to reach Leigie who was sprawled out on the floor a ways away.
With my momentum, I kick his head. There's no resistance. He dodged. No, he disappeared.
The Teleportation Skill possessed by Sloth. A skill that lets him transfer himself anywhere within his own territory.

His presence is behind me. Before I even sensed it, my body moved.
It was a high kick carrying forward all my momentum. The tip of my foot collides with Leigie's head.
I understand. My thoughts understand. How many years, millennium, megaannum. As a result of my service to him, reading the incomprehensible Lazy King's movements have become possible to me.

The unreadable theory behind his actions was only known to me.
My physical strength broke the ceiling, and a large hole was opened. Blocks as big as

my head start to come down.

My body becomes heavy. It's a skill to convert a Demon's Longings to weight, and bind them. A Skill of Sloth.
I already know it. I activate『Overrule』, and break through it without a problem.

What's frightening is his tenacity, his vitality.
I should have delivered enough damage that it wasn't strange if a normal Demon Lord was killed, but the VIT that let him activate a skill without issue is the characteristic of Sloth.

Then I just have to hit him with an even greater power head-on.

"… It hurts…"

A slow voice leaks out of the hole that was opened.
I concentrate my power.

Getting into a long range battle with him is foolish. I pierce the ground with my feet, and concentrate power on my core.

"Here I come."

With my leap, the barrier breaks, and the floor caves in beneath me.
I load my body with explosive power, and jump through the hole in the ceiling.
What enters my eyes is the form of Leigie buried in a mountain of rubble. He oozes tears, as he holds his head. His injuries have already healed.
Seeing me almost instantly close the distance between us, he directs a surprised expression. As always, killing intent, blood thirst, or anything that could be called fighting spirit is completely absent in him.

"HaaAAAAAAAH!"

"Ku…

Yell. Roar.
Using all the power in my body, I send out a strike.
Leigie's expression warped for the first time. At the same time, an invisible wall appeared around his body.

A Sloth Skill to erect a defense-raising barrier.
Useless. I already know of that one.

(TL Useless means Muda)

As my fist hits it, without offering any resistance, the barrier shatters like glass.
As long as I've Overruled it before, utilizing a barrier is the height of folly.
My heart circulates heat around my body.

Before my fist could touch Leigie's chin, his figure vanished.
What a troublesome Skill. But a moving Sloth is a contradiction.
His use of that is one of the factors leading to his diminishing Sloth.

"… Did I do something to you?"

There's no need to ask. There's no way our conversations will mesh.
I swung my hand upwards at the voice that came from my side.
Leigie used his arm to guard against it.
I hear his bones grate.
Among Sloth Skills, there's one to completely shut down their already-slow reaction to pain. Leigie's expression doesn't seem to look pained anymore.
And even if I do injure him, with Leigie-sama's vitality, he'll heal it in an instant.

"Father, please rest already."

"… Yeah."

With eyes that conveyed, 'What the hell is this guy saying,' he nodded.
He isn't listening. We cannot communicate.
With this unstable footing, kicking would be difficult. On my clenched fists, I used a body strengthening Skill before throwing it out.

Leigie prepared his arms to take it.
There is no battle theory behind Leigie of Sloth. His attack techniques are laughably simple.

It is… suppression by pure power

A power strong enough to rip apart a normal Demon Lord… a mass of Soul.
In it, ordinary technique held no meaning, and he has no thoughts to utilize such technique.

With every blow, Leigie's arms let out ominous sounds.

I'm pushing him back.

But there isn't any anguish on his face, and while I may be able to make him use up power with blows of this level, it isn't enough to deal a decisive blow.
He's too hard. But I knew that from the beginning.

The fact that I was pushing back the Lord of Sloth served to strengthen my『Overrule』even further. Power flows up from the depths of my body.
And finally, my kick breaks his guard, and Leigie is sent flying through the last layer of ceiling.

A blood-red sky, and the black structure of the Castle of Shadows… the fortress expanded as far as my vision would permit.
Once per day, I take it to look over it from on top of the tower. We're not as high up as the tower, but the sight from up here isn't something to be made fun of.
I've always felt a sense of resignation at the fact that this spectacle would crumble one day.

The soldiers keeping watch hurriedly came running to me at having the ceiling be penetrated.

"W-what happened, Heard-sama?"

"There is no need for the likes of you to mind it. Return to your post."

"Y-yes. Understood sir!"

It’s all a trivial talk.
I leisurely look over the fortress, as I advance towards the falling Leigie.

“Father, don’t you think it’s beautiful?”

“… Yeah.”

Without even taking a glance at his surroundings, the motives behind his answers are something I’ll never understand.
So this is just self-satisfaction.

His suspicious eyes, his black, impure pupils look up at me.
Emotionless eyes. The eyes of a dead fish.
I harden the palm of my hand to create a blade shape with it.

(TL: He’s doing tegatana, , a position usually used to chop. In this instance, he’s using it to pierce)

“Next, I’ll be cutting.”

“… I give up.”

“……”

All of this is something I’ve seen too many times.
That conduct, fooled by his sloppy gesture, dozens of Demon Lords have fallen.

But for me, I, his son, am the only one who understands. This man actually pulls through when the time calls for it.
He needs no fighting spirit or killing intent. Just so that he can slack off further, Leigie uses his power.
Therefore, he hasn’t fled yet. Even though he could have jumped far away with his teleportation by now.

… It’s because he thinks running from me here holds no meaning.

Let it be so.
Thus is what signifies him as the Lord of Sloth

He doesn’t want to fight, but I’m a pain, so he’ll try and crush me.
His impure motives that paint out the Fighting Spirit of most Demons is the proof of his desire.
The contrast between him and what most would think of Sloth is what has made many Demons, Demon Lords fall. I always observed that aspect of him in great detail.

Even now, Leigie’s power is gradually declining. He’s accumulated enormous reserves, so it’s hard to notice, but while his power may seem close to infinite, it is infinite by no means.
If I retreated here, and challenged him again once my condition was perfect once more, I’ll bet I would be able to gain an even greater advantage.

But that choice is impossible. Leaving to gain an advantage?

Why must I draw back for a petty reason like that!?

"… Hm, you have no need to offer me that treatment. There's no way I would ever lose regardless."

"… Yeah, you're the strongest."

The flaming sun of the Demon World shined on us with its blood red light.
It was a sight that had been there from the moment I was created, and at the same time, it's a scene Leigie has looked upon for long before that.

Leigie speaks with a troubled voice.
At the same time, masses of power are lowered on me from the sky.

『Sky Right Hand』 and 『Sky Left Hand』.

A telekinetic power that works in tandem with his arms. It's a worthless skill used to pick up items without having to move, but its explosive power are a threat as they try to crush me.

But the mass of power dispersed. I 『Overruled』 that skill in a time long passed. My preparations are perfect.
Leigie makes an obvious frown.

"… This is a pain."

"… Hm, I think you just take life too easily, Father."

It's likely that in his endlessly long life, this is one of the first times he's had one of his Skills nullified.
I'm the opposite. Because 『Superbia』 is a nature of pride, I already know most skills. The opponents I fight often try to make countermeasures for me, but I was able to crush them all head-on.

Father has merely lived life without aim. Just how useless of a truth.

In just a step, I made contact with him. I stomp on his head. There is resistance. There is, but he hasn't been crushed.
I stick my hand into his shoulder.
It's a dull feeling, as If I was cutting through metal. The level of hardness caused my palm to be the one creaking this time.
A wet and cold sensation. Leigie looked up at me with meaningless eyes, and looking at his shoulder, he raised a short scream.

It's working. I'm able to pierce his defense.
I remove my hand from the hole in the shoulder, and shake off the blood on my hand before starting a series of consecutive attacks.
Leigie disappears. But my soul hardened through battle made me perceive his next location instantly.

Ten meters behind. That's a distance I can span almost instantaneously.
As I turn around, I lunge with my hand blade.
It pierces through Leigie's prepared arms, and fresh blood flies.

Slow. Way too slow.
He can probably follow me with his eyes. But his body that he rarely moves is unable to dodge.

As long as he doesn’t use that teleportation with high energy expenditure.

I nullify the『Sky Hand』he sends straight at me.
To still try and use it after coming to this point, does he really have no other offensive skills?
That seems right. A Demon’s Skills have rules. It’s impossible to specialize in both offense and defense at the same time.
And Sloth skills are made to spend time in Sloth. They’re mostly passives, and few can be actively called upon.

Even without a sense of pain, thinking it was bad to take attacks consecutively, Leigie disappears again.
I perceive. A massive power moved to the top of the tower.

On top of the tallest building within the Castle of Shadows.

Sprawled out on top of the conical roof, the eyes of Leigie as he looks down on me are sleepy, meaning he wasn’t leaving a break in his defenses.
The distance is a few hundred meters. But to me, that distance is close to Zero.
The second I was about to jump at him, a strange breaking sound resounded through the fortress.

A brown object stands up.

Much less an expression, its brown head doesn’t even have eyes, nose or mouth.
Its long and narrow body, as well as its long limbs were all made of dirt-like material, and by barely glancing over its body, it’s easy to see it was made to resemble human form.
No matter how vast the Demon World may be, I doubt there exists a Demon with this shape.

A Skill to produce a Doll that grows.
The skill that constitutes the reason Leigie’s title is Slaughterdolls.

『Slaughter Doll』.

I remember myself when I had just been born, and frown.

“… Hm, useless.”

There’s no way a freshly born Doll made by a hard-pressed Leigie would be a match for me.

Even if…

I look over the army of dolls being constructed around me without any emotions or sense of pain.

… their numbers surpass a hundred.

I bring my hand down on the closest Doll, and split it in two.
There was some resistance, but I don’t even need to dodge against things of this level.
I confirm the brown substance left on my hand.

"… Dirt… no, a Doll with sand as the base…"

He probably used the traces of sand that had built up on top of the fortress as the base to create them.
Truly, to be able to birth this much at once is a threat.

But for him to use up his own power for such a useless skill was an option I thought he wouldn't choose.
Even is this skill was all he had left.

I look up at Father standing high in the heavens.

"… Father, is this supposed to be your final struggle…?"

Having been born first, there's no way I'll lose.
If you add on『Superbia』's characteristics, then more so.

The clay dolls rushing at me are definitely fast, and their power isn't weak.
But that's it. Without any desire, and no experience.

But still, crushing this amount will be a pain.
I close my eyes, and activate a skill.

『Hard Pressure』

A higher class Pride Skill.
It's a worthless skill to force others to kneel. But it's a useful one for thinning out the weak.
Unable to stand the pressure, the limitless Dolls fell to the ground.
I step on the nearest Doll's head, and crush it.
How useless. Or is it that he thought those numbers would be able to defeat me?

"… I'll be up in a moment, Father."

I put power into my legs. I circulate my magic. I deliver a strong kick to the stone pavement.
Mighty physical prowess. The pitiful clay dolls prostrated on the ground and everything else on earth is left behind me, and my field of vision instantly ascended.

… In the distant past, I've made it so I could fly anywhere.

Even if Father doesn't lend me a hand.

I grab onto the tower's pointed tip, to kill my momentum and stuck my feet into the roof tiles.
The sprawled out Leigie comes at me with quick movements I've never seen before. But even that is too slow.
By that time, my hand had already pierced father's left breast… a Demon's heart, the place where his Soul Core lay.
Leigie's eyes distort in shock, as he looks at his chest.

"Good night, Father. Please leave the rest to me."

"… Yeah…"

My hand has definitely crushed his heart.

His Abyss Zone fades.
When I removed my hand, the Lord of Depravity leisurely fell to the ground.
And like dried leaves, he began to fall down to the bottom of the tower.
I Overruled him. But I don't feel the slightest sense of achievement.
Having fulfilled the final piece of my『Pride』, my instincts told me I had finally reached Demon Lord Level.

At the very least, for now, let me offer a prayer to the Great Lazy King.
Thus, I will rule over everything, and offer it up to my late Master.

There is nothing more appropriate for the curtain call.

Part 4: … How Useless

In this world, everything is nothing but a trifle.
That little girl Kanon becoming the Great Demon King must be the end of the world, and with her trying to suppress not only the Heavens, but even the Demon World, this situation really is the worst.
For me, who even took down my Supreme Master, they're no enemies of me. It's obvious.

If it's now, then even God can fall by my hand.

I clench the palm of my hand. My power has increased.
My Pride Tree which had stagnated because I was unable to become a Demon Lord suddenly experienced frightening growth.

Enlarging perception. The new Skill I obtained,『Abyss Zone』instantly spread to cover the Castle of Shadows that had lost its master.
Differing from the Acedia Father released, a Superbia power that seemed to push down on people from above.

But in it, I didn't feel exaltation or anything. Not even a feeling of achievement.
Even though there should be nothing standing above me anymore.

"… Hm, everything is useless, I see."

Not a single enemy for me exists within this Demon World.
Even the one selected as the most powerful Demon Lord, Kanon of Ruin… for me that's known her since her childhood, I doubt she can rival me. For my Pride, it was an overwhelming predominance.

The Demons I pass look at me, and kneel as they lower their heads.
What useless folk. Without even proceeding their desires, they're fools who content themselves in naught but what is given to them by others.

After fulfilling my pride, I only had one place to aim for.

I wandered to the Lord's Throne Room. The throne that no one had ever sat in before stood there silently.

Metal that was exceedingly rare, even in the Demon World was skillfully worked on by artisans for many months and years to construct the jet-black throne.
I'll bet it's cleaned regularly. In that space without a speck of dust, as if it were sleeping just like father, the air was filled with a quiet and tranquil atmosphere.

Without faltering, I lowered myself into the seat that had never been sat on once. The throne was merely hard, and cold.
I have no suitable enemies in this Demon World. I also don't have the incentive to go bully that little girl Kanon.
I put my elbow on the armrest, and thought.

"If there's nothing for me in the Demon World… then should I go invade Heaven…"

I recall the small, hateful, pure-white wings of God's vanguard.
By nature, those ones have a large superiority complex against Demons. I'll destroy them head-on. It'll at least help kill some time.
And even in the heavens, it will resound in every direction.
My name. And the name of the Great King of Depravity.

The door is violently thrown open.
The one who entered was a crimson-haired Demon by the name of Lize Bloodcross. At the same time, like Kanon once was, she's the woman who was Father's inspector.
Her fiery glare that was like a raging fire incarnate, and her looks were that of an angry soul.
She's a foolish female Demon who, of all things, asked a Superbia like me to preserve the lives of Deije and Medea, who had failed their mission.

"…! Heard Lauder. What is the meaning…"

"… Hm, Father has perished."

"Perished!? Leigie of Sloth!? Just what could possibly…"

She's a woman who says useless things.
There's no way father could be taken down by an existence apart from mine.

"I killed him. Go tell that little girl Kanon. Leigie-sama's authority… will be succeeded by me."

I use Evil Eyes.
Lize's body goes rigid.
I see, so this is『Evil Eye』. This is the first I'm using it, but what a useless Skill.
Subjugating an opposing force holds meaning only if it is by one's hand alone.

"You are… a Demon Lord!? Gu… Heard Lauder. Could it be that by killing your Lord…"

Killing one's master. That is Superbia's long-lived desire.
Pride become pride by overruling everything superior to them.

"You're a slow woman, aren't you. That's what I just told you. There won't be a second time. Go tell Kanon. Don't bring trouble to my hand."

"… Why did Leigie-sama… to the likes of you…"

What an obstinate woman.

I stand, and use a Skill.
The Skills I obtained upon reaching Lord Class will definitely come into use in the upcoming war. There is nothing to be lost in training them.

My thoughts accelerate. The world stops for a moment.
My body is light.
In a single step, I approach her, grab her by the neck, and lift her.
It wasn't until her neck was strangled that Lize showed surprise for the first time.

"Gu… wha… go…"

"I told you there wasn't a second time… Hm, to be lead inspector at this level, their quality sure has dropped over the years."

Frail. Way too frail. Compared to Leigie-sama, just how frail is this world?
If I just put in a little power, it feels everything will break.

Lize's face is tinted purple. Her Flames of Wrath lick my arms, but for me who's even Overruled Kanon's flames, there's no way it would work.

…Hm, useless. There's not even any worth in killing her.

With one hand, I throw her at the wall. I did make sure to hold back. I doubt she'll die from that.
You still have the crucial job of reporting my words to Kanon.

Everything is moving slowly.
This is one of the Skills of a Demon Lord of Pride.

『The Only Lord』

It greatly elevates one's speed of perception, to make the world your own.
It's the furthest land of pride that holds meaning only since I've trained my body to this level.

Me sitting back on the throne, and Lize hitting the wall happened almost simultaneously.
The room shakes greatly, and pebbles fall from up high.

The Castle of Shadows is, in itself, father's mausoleum.
I'll have to fix it up and renovate it. In place of a fortress, a splendid palace.

I'll also have to reorganize the army.
Neither Medea nor Deije are here anymore.

Naturally, there's also the option of me venturing forth alone.
The reason three brigades existed was largely because father never went out himself.

"… The world is in my hands, is it?"

Just how much value does the world hold?
If I get my hands on all of it, will I understand that? Just what was the Superbia Great Demon King of old thinking of when he tried to get his hands on it?
It sounds to me like a completely worthless notion, but so be it.
Dominate the entire world, and making my name known across it doesn't sound bad

as a temporary goal.

"… Heard-sama…"

"Enter."

A reserved knock came from the door. I already recognize this existence. A demon Lord's perception is far wider than a normal Demon's. But even if I weren't a Demon Lord, I probably would have noticed.
That's just how excited that presence was.

The one who entered with a slightly stiff face was Hiero.
A Demon of Pride. The younger sister of Lorna of Lust, and a woman who pursues pride with a path different to mine.
Perhaps because the door was opened, or because a hole had been made in the wall, a cold air drifts in.

"… You crushed Leigie-sama, didn't you."

"Yeah, Leigie-sama was strong."

"… Congratulations, your Demon Lord Excellency. I, Hiero will serve you with all my might."

"… Hm, cease with the useless babble. What business do you have with me?"

"Ye… yes!"

Her expression as she kneeled was pale, and there are tears surfacing in her eyes. Even without looking at her, I can tell her arms and legs are shaking lightly.

Fear… is it?

What a useless Demon. Even if you hold reverence for the strong, if you remain fearful, you'll never be able to Overrule them.
That is the lone taboo among Pride.

"The truth is… well…"

"Make it short. You won't get another chance."

"… Medea escaped."

"… I see."

I glare at Hiero. What a useless woman.
To let an Envy Demon that had weakened to that extent escape, just how incorrigible is she?
Disgrace. That is the most unforgivable deed to me. This doesn't change even if the other side's a Pride Demon like me.

I stand before her.
I understand the true colors of the fear on her face.
I've seen it countless times in my long years of life… The eyes of prey as they look upon their predator.

A smart woman.
She thinks much better than her sister.

And she is likely correct.
If she tried to run away for her failure, even if she fled to the greatest depths of hell, I would chase her down and kill her.
Kill her with all certainty. Slay her gruesomely. Make her regret being born into this world.

But since she reported it herself, I'll bury her in a single blow.

"Let's hear your final words."

What returned from Hiero's lips wasn't a plea for life.
With a shaking voice, she looked up at me.

"… Please tell my just one thing. After overruling even Leigie-sama, what is there left for you to do, Heard-sama."

"… Hm, that's obvious, is it not? I'll…"

… Take the world in my hand, and have Leigie-sama's name ring true through it.

When I was about to say that, Hiero let out a light sneeze.
I knit my brow. Seeing my expression, she hurriedly makes an apology.

"I-I deeply apologize. It's just that… it's so cold…"

Hiero holds her arms, and not out of fear for me, shakes her body.

It definitely is cold. Before I noticed it, Frost had begun to set in on the floor. The room's temperature is already well below freezing point.
The hole in the wall is quite far, and until a little while ago, it shouldn't have been this cold.
This is a clearly abnormal situation.

"… Strange. What is happening?"

If I look back on my few million year of existence, I don't think something like this has happened before.
Unlike Hiero, as a Demon Lord, I have a Resistance to cold. This level poses no problem.
But it's unsettling that I don't know the cause.

Hiero sneezes once more, and offers another excuse.

"… T-today sure is cold, isn't it…"

"… Don't be stupid, there's no way the temperature can drop this low in the middle of the day."

In the first place, even normal Demons should have enough Resistances to let them pay no mind to fluctuations in temperature on the level of natural phenomena.
I probe through everywhere within my Zone.
But searching with a Skill I was using for the first time didn't really feel right in my

hands. The further I tried to look, the duller my senses became.

Abnormal Weather? It definitely is winter, but this is…

Lize finally gets up from the crushed wall. Her hair clings to her face due to the blood flowing from it, but I can see a sharp glare coming from the gaps in it.

"Heard Lauder. I won't accept it. To kill your lord…"

"… Hm. I never had the intention of getting you to accept it."

The right to decide lies with Kanon alone.
And even if Kanon doesn't accept me, then I just have to rule everything and all will be settled.
Lize's body is clad in crimson flame. The frost on the ground instantly evaporates, and disappears into the air.

It's a higher class Ira Skill.
『Breath of Flame』.

What useless power. For you, who hasn't even become a Demon Lord, you won't even be able to scratch me.
That's the simple gap in our magic. Unless the difference is great enough, you cannot overturn an Overrule.

Our eyes clash. Compared to Kanon, just how thin is her Wrath. Diminutive. Your Wrath is lacking greatly in something called weight.

Onto the Raging Lize's side, Hiero shook as she walked.
Based on her positioning, I thought she was going to ask for help, but she just began warming herself.

I look at her dumbfounded. Lize is the same. Hiero's eyes are open wide, and she squats.

"… What the hell are you doing?"

"…Uu… it's cold…"

The form of her shaking as she held up the palms of her hand to the flame could only be looked on as a joke, given the situation, but the individual was quite desperate.

But even so… the temperature has fallen even lower than before.

Lize doesn't matter anymore. I can kill her in an instant, and her attacks can't even be compared to a deteriorated Kanon. I can Overrule her.
But this cold is dangerous. That's what my accumulated and sharpened experience was telling me.
As she shakes, Hiero looks up at me.

"… Heard-sama, did you properly deliver a finishing blow to Leigie-sama?"

"I crushed his Soul Core. He's perished without a doubt."

Once their Soul Core heart is destroyed, a Demon cannot continue to exist.

"Then why is it so cold… it's definitely related in some way…"

I understand what she's trying to say.
Let it be so.
With this timing, it's unthinkable that there's no correlation.
But there should be no Sloth Skill to drop temperature. At the very least, I've never bared witness to one in my many years of life. In the first place, a Demon's Desire can take shape in the Flames of Wrath, but there is no variant that controls ice.

The moment I begun to frown, I sensed something unbelievable happen.
As if a pillar of ice had been inserted into my spine, a cold impact ran up my body.

"… My『Zone』was broken, you say…"

"… Kusu kusu, see~ it's because you didn't see Leigie-sama off 'til the end… achoo."

"… You, I'm surprised you can laugh at a time like this…"

The atmosphere is repainted.
From a heavy pressurized air… to a frozen, dark and gloomy one.
It was definitely not the familiar『Acedia』of my father.
It's not Greed or Lust or Wrath or Gluttony or Envy or even Pride.

Lize's face distorts.

"Wh at… this presence is…"

"What Demon Lord is this… no, is it even a Demon Lord?"

The instant I perceived it, my legs arbitrarily began to race towards it.
My vision flows by with great speed.

I hold no interest in either Lize or Hiero.
There's no way any interest would rise towards existences I could just kill off at any time.
Silver curtains had been lowered on the Castle of Shadows.
White piled up snow, and large pillars of ice that even extended to the ceiling.

And… the suspended form of the retainers.
With pale expressions of fear, the hardened retainer's body shook.
Cold… He's been completely frozen.

"… Hm, this definitely isn't natural."

The magic lurking here is the same as what broke my Zone.

Sloth and Greed and Lust and Gluttony and Pride, and even Wrath that had the corresponding flames to deal with it, everything had been frozen indiscriminately.
The closer and closer I got to the mass of power, the lower the temperature fell.

On the way forward, I spotted a familiar Demon, and stopped for a moment.
Lorna had been frozen with a peaceful expression as she pushed a cart.
There was no fear on her face. Without being given the time to fear, she had been frozen instantly.

What frightening power.

This output rivals the flames of Ira.

This scope rivals the wave of Gula.

Interesting.
How suitable for my first opponent as a Demon Lord.

I'm starting to see the future my new power holds.
I can't help but start to see it take shape.

Hiero already said it, but for an opponent to be able to use skills with this output, if you ignore the possibility of an outside invader, there's only one within the Castle of Shadows.
No… there should only be one.

The door had been frozen shut with pale blue ice.
I forcefully ripped open the door to Father's room.

It was as if all time in the room had stopped.

On the sight that entered my eyes, I felt my own heart become astir.

Everything was covered in frost, and the temperature pierced even through my cold Resistance. Within that frozen land, a single man sat on an armchair with his knees hugged close to his body.
It's definitely my father, whose Soul Core should have been crushed. It's so quiet I cannot even tell whether he's alive or dead.
… I try to take a step forward, and instinctively recall my leg.
I look down on my foot, and open my eyes wide.

"… What… is this…"

My leg had been completely frozen over.
I have no feeling in it. There's not even any pain. As if it had been reduced to inorganic substance, its smooth and shiny surface catches the light in a dubious way.
I try putting the palm of my hand to it. It's extremely hard, and cold. A dim pain runs up my arm.
Resistance type skills generally grow the more you take damage from that attribute. I did have a resistance to the flames of Wrath, but I only have a low level one for ice.

If you ask why… of the skills permitted to Demons by the Seven Original Sins, from the start, there were no ice attribute attacks.
I unintentionally sighed.

"Father… for you to be hiding a trump card this severe…"

It's a power I never anticipated.
My sigh freezes in the air, and a faint sound rings out as it falls to the floor as small beads of ice.
I take a step into the room. A silver world close to absolute zero. Without sound, or dust or anything to exist to taint the pure air.
By the time my half-frozen feet had stepped forward, ice quickly began encroaching all over my body.

It's as I thought. The temperature in this room is on another level from that outside. The area ahead's sealed off with a barrier, it seems.

"… But there is nothing more suitable for the one that is Master."

That's right. I thought I had won all too easily. I thought that there was no way that was all he had.
I mean, when it looked like it was over, there wasn't a single wound on my body.

The encroaching ice stops.

As if I would be done in by something like a barrier.
My pride alone is the only thing I've taken with me into this dead world.

Every time I take a step ahead, a wave of power burns my skin.
Its outputs falls in no way short of Wrath. The zone doesn't permit resistance, and this frozen-over stagnant world can be none other than Father's perfect world.
A cruel world where neither my speed nor my power hold any meaning.

If I don't exert all of my power, I would turn to ice in an instant. Just like the Demons outside.

"… Well, well… how useless am I…"

But breaking everything head on is my Superbia.
Plans are unnecessary before my Pride.

My memories resurface.
Always alone, the one who stood above me. My absolute creator.
No matter how much his actions and appearance were of Sloth, that all was irrelevant.
The power of Sloth. Just having that was enough.

Ah, just how strong, how beautiful it is.
In the vast Demon World, and even the heavens, there cannot exist something this complete, this beautiful.

And that's exactly why I have meaning.

"… I will surpass this."

I really know not when to give up.
I don't know by what theory he still lives when his Soul Core was crushed, but once more, I'll sink you into the depths of Sheol.

I declare to my Master, whose head is lowered into the knees he hugged to himself.
His unmoving arms, which were already white, have surpassed that, and they've become transparent like ice.
White frost has descended on his hair as black as mine.

His form was so lifeless, I almost lost interest in attacking.
The distance is half a meter. If I extend my hand, I can reach him easily. But his fleeting existence was one that felt as if it would break if I set my hand on it.
At that moment, father's face slowly rose.

Like glass balls, his emotionless eyes looked at me without any meaning. The glint in them had much more color than before, and his eyes were filled with much more dark despair.

Even for one who had served him forever, it was the first time I saw that expression.

And Father's mouth that barely did any work opened ever-so-slightly, and began to move.

Chapter 8: Melancholia's Depression

Part 1: I Met a Single Hero

This is perhaps the oldest memory I have.

Of when I hadn't even become a Demon Lord, and was just a bit of a Lazy Demon.
I met a single Hero. She was a Hero with lovely silver hair, and her strength… looking back now, I can say she wasn't particularly strong. Anyways, she had transparent courage like a diamond, and her eyes held a strong will honed like a blade. Including my past life, she was the most beautiful thing I gazed upon.

Serge of the Silver Blue. That was the Hero's name.

Just a little bit stronger than others, just a little bit talented, and incidentally, a little bit courageous. The name of a girl with nothing but that to her name.
The name of a warrior, who, even though it was the most she could do to defeat Demons of the lowest rank, she held reckless dreams, and descended into the Demon World by her lonesome self.

Compared to Humans, the Demon World's Demons are transcendentally strong.
Therefore, a teenage girl challenging the Demon World was, without any discussion, simply foolish, and it's probable that her luck was exceedingly good for me to have been the first one she met. I won't move.

My fight with Serge was the height of violence.
Against me, who simply remained limp and sprawled out, the aloof Hero continued to swing her Holy Sword alone.

Her will, and spirit were sufficient in themselves, but the difference in power was clear as day. Those attacks were only barely able to scratch me, and those wounds instantly disappeared. I didn't have any Skills that could kill Serge, nor did I have the will, and Serge's power was only barely able to overcome my VIT.
It was a foolish repetition of the same act over and over again, a death match that would never end. Perhaps it wasn't something that could even be called a battle. If I had to say, I had the advantage, but even with it, I lacked the means to issue a decisive blow.
Even so, the girl who didn't take a step back even after encountering a situation that would go on for eternity's way of life was definitely that of a Hero, and it made me recall that this was indeed another world.

And at the same time, I thought. If I worked hard enough that I oozed blood, if I trained my heart out, if I became strong, I could defeat this Hero.

That might be fine for me.
Demon Lords are ones who eventually have to subjugate Heroes. Even for one who rarely played any games in my past life, I at least knew that. For the Demon Lord, that was the Happy Ending. It's not like I'm living here because I like it. It's just because I hate death that I continue to live on…

… But even that, if it's for this Hero's sake, I thought I could endure it.

Our reunion happened five years later. I had counted the days, so I remember it

clearly.

Serge had grown.

From a girl who, while strong for a human, compared to Demons, wasn't particularly strong; who couldn't kill a single Demon of Sloth, and where the only thing that excelled in her was her courage, to one who, could take on a General Class Demon who was born, raised and trained in this great warring era one on one. Top Class within all of humanity… their supreme blade.

In game terms, perhaps she was a broken character.

No, that would be an insult to her. I have no idea just how much training she put in. Enough to make her spit up blood, where if a constantly enervated individual like me were to undertake it, I would give in in a few minutes. There's no doubt she repeated a training like that. In those five years, how many adventures has she had? For someone who did nothing but sleep like me, I had no ways of knowing.
What I know is but two things. Two simple truths.

She had become a Hero who could evenly match blows with a General Class Demon.

And I had become a Demon Lord.

This age, this world is cruel, fleeting, and useless.

The Demon World obeys the laws of the jungle. My Sloth had surpassed Serge's effort. That is all.
The fighting spirit Serge devoted her life to, the blade that was once able to deliver the slightest of scratches to me, couldn't even cut a strand of my hair by the time we met again. An insurmountable gap had been born between us.

It's not always certain that hard work will be rewarded.
That miserable and desolate law from my past life applied to this world as well.

This is something I can only say after having seen the result.

Even though Serge could barely scratch me in the first match, she didn't feel she had to retreat. That as long as she could injure me in the slightest, it was her duty to kill me. That was her first, and last chance. And as she was a human, she was unable to escape the shackles of her lifespan. She had lost that opportunity for all eternity.

She shed tears as she held her sword aloft. That Hero's eyes were, just as when we first met, beautiful, and ephemeral, and looking at the edge of her blade that sparkled like a shooting star, I became sleepy, and dozed off.

When I awoke, what entered my eyes was the form of a kneeling Hero with large tears streaming down her face.
The Holy Sword had lost its light, and having been reduced to a normal hunk of iron, it had been casually pierced into the ground.
There wasn't a single wound on Serge. That's obvious. It's because I haven't laid a single finger on her. But the Hero who would always fight on, no matter what serious injuries she suffered, even if an arm or a leg were blown off, had been reduced to a sobbing little girl.

Not a fragment of fighting spirit remains in her hollow eyes.

It was as if I had broken something within her.

From the moment I first met her, what I felt probably was love. Probably. I don't remember it anymore, but looking back, I think it might have been something like that.
However, in the end, I cannot remember what became of that Hero. All I know is that the exploits of the one called the overworld's shining star of hope, Serge of the Silver Blue came to an end that day.

… The King of Depravity.

It had always been strange.
It was always one of the questions I had from the time I reincarnated.

Why do the other demons have that fiery black glint in their souls? Why do they rage and seek and despise and violate and eat and envy?

Why can't they just quietly sleep?
If they want power as a Demon… just sleeping would be more than enough.

Why do they try so hard to be active?
A Demon's body, if it does nothing but sleep, unlike the humans who can live a hundred years at most, can live hundreds and thousands and millions of years. An endless time, it seems.

I realized that that was a mistake a long time later.

An uncountable number of years passed. I put a countless number of Demons, Heroes and even Angels to sleep, and eventually, someone started calling me some useless name like the『King of Depravity』. When I had become widely acknowledged, I finally realized it.

Ah, this is their nature.

To them, raging, and seeking, and despising, and violating, and envying is their very reason for living, and the validation for their life.

What a useless talk. It's not that they can't sleep. They can't bring themselves to stay sleeping. In order to refine their souls.
To summarize, our resolve was different, and for the Demon Lord of Sloth who simply lived without any meaning, it was likely something he would never be able to understand in his entire overly-long life.

I was never thinking of anything. Power never really mattered. I never had any plans to prove my existence.
From the time I lived in peaceful Japan, I barely had any desire. No hobbies. In the space left by my lack of purpose, sleep was the only thing that could fill my heart.
Apparently, this isn't an uncommon story for youths living in modern society. If they were to be reincarnated into this world, they might all end up as Sloth Demons like me.

I never had a goal. If you forced me to say it, then Sloth itself was my goal, and compared to the Demons who were longing for the power that lay at the end of their desires, that is probably the reason I was able to become a Demon Lord more quickly.

A Boring story.
A world where idleness turns into hard work.
To me, who did nothing but sleep… to me, who did nothing but sleep meaninglessly, Demons and Humans and Angels got on their knees. Within them, there were even other Demons of Sloth.

Depravity? Wrong. To me, this is just my life style.
I'm one who will do what I must when the time comes. It's just that that time never came for me.

Just by closing my eyes, I could gradually feel my own power increasing. I didn't care.
The skills I could use, the things I could do gradually increased. Proportionally, the scope of my activities gradually narrowed. With the power of my Skills, I didn't need to eat or use the restroom. Even breathing became unnecessary. But I didn't care about that either.

… Please, just let me sleep.

A break of a week can put your sense of time in a mess. At the very least, that's how it was for me.
A week became a day, and I started to feel them as seconds. But I didn't need time. Only years started passing. The enemies and allies around me change.

I wasn't counting, but probably after around eighty years had passed.
When even sleeping started to feel like a pain, I noticed. No, perhaps it's something new I obtained at that time.

A power to put myself to sleep.
Just as the Sloth Skill Tree had awakened in me, like an adjoined tree of interlocking branches, a single new Skill Line.

『Melancholia』

Of Sloth that governs cold despair, and anxiety, a Subtree.

And once more, the meaningless loser was able to lie around like garbage.
Where effort and training and even emotions held no meaning, a world covered in pure darkness.
It was, like a thin layer of ice, cold, fleeting, and beautiful.

Part 2: I'm Not Satisfied With This World Yet

"It's really… depressing."

Making a small sound, the air loses its heat and freezes.
It's cold. Nothing but cold. As if from the depths of my body, the depths of my heart, heat was stolen away.
But at the same time, Sloth's cold resistance isn't one that can be breached by temperature of this level.

It was a lovely silver world.
Everything was white and frozen solid, and the air that had lost any speck of dust was as serene as a high mountain peak.

Before my eyes, a man had completely frozen.
A black-haired, tall man. Even from over his clothes, I could clearly see his trained body and magic. In his eyes that had been suspended in an open state, what was reflected was resignation and anxiety, and at the same time, strong delight. His mouth had curved into a smile.
I extend my legs from the armchair, and gently stand up. From my feet, I feel a piercing cold like never before, but I grit my teeth, and endure it.

My power of Sloth has declined. Sloth doesn't even permit standing.
It's not that I don't stand up. I can't stand. I can't move. Such is the curse of Sloth.

But to someone like me who doesn't care about power, I don't care about that concept either.

Perhaps because the origin of my power has shifted to Melancholia, my heart was simply heavy.

I gently put my hand on the man's solid expression.
It's a familiar face. He's a man who's attached himself to me since times long passed. I don't remember his name, but his appearance had been firmly etched into my mind.

"… Are you satisfied yet…"

"…"

With a cracking sound, through my finger, the power from the right of my chest, from the second Soul Core that manifested upon me unlocking Melancholia expanded.
Around the man whose figure had been frozen, water circles, and he's encased in a block of ice.

It's a『Melancholia』Skill to birth a coffin of ice.

『Freezing Grave』.

I walk past the man who had completely become a pillar of ice.

I guess it's been around a hundred years since my birth, and never have I properly fought or even trained.
Even so, why is it that in this world where strength is everything, I have yet to face a single loss?

I like sleeping.
I like lying on top of the bed without any purpose, and wasting time on nothingness.
Being able to eat without doing anything is wonderful, and I'm relatively pleased that the cleaning gets done without me.
It was something I could never get my hands on back when I was living in Japan.

Even so, I relatively like the thing called hard work. No, more than like, I believed in it.
I'm not going to do it though.
Even so, I can believe in whatever I want, right?

“What a worthless world… this Demon World…”

More so than the Demon World, this entire world is worthless.

This world is harsh and cruel.
Earth had its fair share of cruelties, but this Demon World is much more brutal.

I just didn’t pay mind to it.
No, I didn’t forgive it.
That Serge, who repeated severe training and sharpened her fangs to take down a Demon Lord was defeated by a man who never did anything.

My broken Sloth Soul Core leisurely restores itself. In proportion to that, my head got heavier.

It’s depressing. It’s just depressing.
The cold darkness that had piled up in the depths of my heart.

That feeling I occasionally felt even while I was sleeping was probably the reason behind me unlocking Melancholia. In the past, I always felt depressed before stepping out to go to work or to school, so perhaps that could have been the cause, but I have no means of confirming that, and I don’t care.

My vision grows darker.

I pass through the door that had been frozen open.
The floor that had been lightly dusted with frost was instantly covered in ice. With a crunching sound below me, I ran down the corridor.
My perception that extended over my entire territory was extremely troublesome, and no matter how much time passes, I’ll never get used to it.

Because of my muddy stream of emotions, I slumped with my arm against the wall. Centered around the point I touched, a white power expands. Without a single sound, everything is covered in perpetually constant ice.

In the past, when I first reincarnated into this world, there was one who taught me about Skills.
If you’ll let me be honest for a moment, I didn’t know what they meant.
Of the powers Demons possessed, there were ones that, of Skills themselves, they stole and copied and nullified and ate and annihilated, and other incomprehensible stuff, it seems. There were unfathomable powers with which in one hit, everything would be over. It was too much.

I thought it was impossible.
Nonsense. I don’t want to die yet.
And there shouldn’t be anyone out there that wants to. I mean, it’s not like the world of hell is certain to be easier than the one we live in.
Those feelings were ones I held in my previous life, at least up to the point I died, and even after having lived a long life as a Demon, they haven’t changed a bit.

And so, I didn’t lose. And so, I’m still alive. Without thinking anything, I took down those incomprehensible powers.
Separated from the flow of time, I shut myself in with nothing but the Acedia Card to

protect my body, and the one that would indiscriminately suspend my functioning and bring me into that dark world, the Melancholia Card.

I've only ever wished one thing from those two trump cards.

… Please, just let me sleep. In silence. In sloth.

"Wha… Leigie…sama? What… is…"

The one who appeared around the corner was the Ira Demon. Lize Bloodcross.
She's probably the greatest anti-thesis to my being. An attribute that scatters shining flames.
One incompatible with me, who likes to hide away in damp and dark places.

"Why… Leigie-sama is… walking…"

"There… are even times when I want to walk."

Even like this, I generally commuted in the swaying train to work every day.
It's stranger to… think I can't stand. In the first place, it's common sense that all Demons have basic physical abilities surpassing humans, so when the human me could walk, there's no way the Demon me would be unable to.
Her body is cloaked in an armor of flame.
She's using her mysterious Wrath Powers to stand against this freezing land.
I turn my gaze to the left. A golden-haired Demon who's trying to stay hidden in the shadows.

Step by step, I quietly move my legs forward.
We're about thirty centimeters apart. In a trance-like state, Lize continued to look at me.

"Wai… Lize-san! It's danger…"

"Eh…?"

She's thrust away, and my hand touches air.
But in her place, my hand brushes the gold-haired Demon's hair.

"Why are… moving… it's a fraud… kusu kus…"

In an instant, that girl's time stopped.
With eyes that were about to burst into tears, and warped lips as if she was forcing herself to laugh.

"… I see."

Even me, based on how I feel… there are even times I think about going out for a stroll.

Is that a fraud? Why a fraud?
Who out there decided that it's no good for Demons of Sloth to move?

Lize hurriedly runs up to the frozen Demon.

"Hiero!? Leigie-sama w-why… to an ally…"

Why? For what reason? That's simple.

"Because I want to sleep peacefully."

"Hah!? Eh? You want… to sleep?"

"… Also, this… I can't actually control it."

"Eh? What an annoying…"

My outstretched hand grazed Lize's shoulder.
Her flames go out in an instant, and like that, she ceases.
With an idiotic expression unthinkable for one who governed Wrath, she doesn't move anymore.
And even if it's something I brought about myself, I feel endless sorrow and emptiness. At the same time, I feel the Melancholy Tree advancing onwards.

Just how fleeting is this world…
Just how fragile is it…

Is that the very reason why the Melancholy Tree within me slowly continues to advance?
An unsightly emotion. For me who lived in nothing but depravity, I should have no right to despair for the world.

In some quiet place, I just want to be alone.
Within this fortress, there are no longer any Demons that can move. But even the icy pillars of their existences are annoying.

Right… I'll climb the tower.
The highest place in this castle.
In the past, someone once carried me to its top. Perhaps about ten years ago?
The uninterrupted sight of the black fortress expanding to a bright red horizon in the distance.

If I were to look at it now, I'm certain I would experience a sentimental feeling.

Part 3: Something Good will Definitely Happen Tomorrow

For some reason, tears came out.
Before something that truly moves them, can people truly do nothing but let the tears flow out?
Even those tears turn to ice the moment they touch my skin, and fall to the ground in beads.

Clad over the black earth, a ridiculously large structure. Limitlessly sturdy, boorish and glass smooth stones were stacked up to make the fortress, and even for me who hasn't the slightest familiarity with architecture, I can see it wasn't built in a matter of a few years.

Differing to what I had become accustom to on Earth, the Demon World's pale blue moon, and red sky were frighteningly captivating, and simply beautiful.

As if to clearly speak that this was a Fantasy World, and without any discussion, I knew it spoke the truth.

The top of the tower was constructed so that from it, you could look out in all directions.
The large four glass windows installed in a circle looked down upon the ground, but for me, one window was more than enough.

"… Hah…"

Upon being exposed to my sigh, the window's glass cracks without a sound.
The fortress without the presence of a single lifeform was cruelly quiet, and cruelly empty.

White grains start falling from the sky.
Even if I didn't reach out to catch one in my hand, I understood. There is no snow in the Demon World.
So for me, it was my first snow in several decades.
Looking at it like this, I'm forced to remember.

"I want to get under a kotatsu…"

AS if in correspondence with my feelings, the glass froze over, and shattered into even smaller pieces. The snow starts falling harder, and a snowstorm overtakes the castle.
… It's not like I'm wishing for any of this, you know.

Snow falls. The Sloth Core that should have been crushed into small pieces has mostly recovered.
For someone like me who possesses Sloth Skills, something like the coldness of snow isn't enough to affect me. But perhaps the fact that a cold sensation comes over me when I touch it is due to my memories from back on Earth.

The moment I thought that, the momentum of the snow increased further. Gray and ominous clouds swirl in the sky, and a vast number of beads of ice knock against the ground. From here, I can't even see over the Fortress anymore.
And that was sorrowful.
As I thought that, the clouds become heavier, and the gray completely turns to black. As if a blackout had descended, the world was wrapped in darkness.

… And of that, I simply felt extreme sorrow.

Piercing cold wind circles.

The Melancholia Tree… was the guy who created this world a complete idiot? This is an infinite loop, isn't it?
No matter how you look at it, this isn't a desire, or a longing, or anything…

The power of Sloth starts to mix in with Melancholy.

Well, that's yet another thing I don't care about.
All things in creation are equally a pain, and all action holds no meaning.

Perhaps because it was the first time I had walked on my own feet in a while, my legs felt heavy.
I sat down on the spot.

Drowsiness soon came over me. It was, continuing on from when I was a human, my greatest companion.
My heart is heavy. My eyelids are heavy.
When I opened my mouth, a small voice leaked out.

"… I'm becoming quite sleepy…"

Returning to the bed is a pain. In the first place, a bed sealed in ice is nothing but hard.
I lied down, and took a big yawn.

There is neither a trace of movement, nor a presence anywhere. For the time being, I should be able to sleep at ease.
I folded my arms, and closed my eyes.
The black darkness I had become accustom to. If I may pray, then I hope that by the time I open my eyes once more, peace and repose will have fallen onto the Demon World.

AS those noble and pure intentions filled my chest, I heard a strange voice.

"… Without any interest for anything in creation, the Lord of Depravity who merely lies at the top… is it? Leigie's past redemption, is he not?"

"Yes. But… I wonder why it is that this man never turns Friendly Fire off…"

"It's exactly because he is Sloth, Lize. I'll… talk with Leigie for a little. You go check the others. If you find anyone still sealed in ice, free them. With your Ira!"

"… Yes, understood."

Of the two powers, the smaller one separated away.
But that doesn't matter. What has captured my senses isn't the large presence before me, but the the countless number of ones appearing within the fortress.
Simply annoying presences.
What suddenly appeared before me as if it had abruptly come into being was definitely one I had completely frozen.

At some point… no, that doesn't matter either. It matters not when it happened.

… Yeah, it's nothing but depressing.

Why is it that whenever I try to sleep, everything tries to get in my way?
Everything should be in a distant hell, in the depths of a silent ice.

I forcefully open my heavy eyelids.
I was shocked. I slowly observed the surroundings.

… This can't be…

"… It's… morning…?"

When I closed my eyes, it was definitely night. At the very least, it wasn't a time of day where it could have become morning in the next few minutes. That didn't change from that world to this one. A shared system.

For night and day to flip instantly, someone able to accomplish such an absurd act shouldn't exist in this vast Demon World.

"… I see, so even before me, you can take on such an attitude…"

… Great Demon King, Kanon.

The strongest Demon Lord who governs Wrath and destruction.
With my memory space that falls a bit short when compared to humanity, it's one of the few names I remember.
I turned onto my back, and looked up at her shadow.

"Could it be… you…"

"… Ku… you haven't changed in the slightest, Leigie. Even when we're meeting for the first in a long time… Well, fine. So be it. Right, I was the one who liberated the world you sealed."

"… By turning night to day!? … when did you get that sort of…"

What a dreadful Skill…
While I'll sleep regardless of whether it be night or day, if I had to say, I'm a night person. It's nothing but my natural enemy.
I cover my eyes with my arm to intercept the sun's light.

"W-wait. What are you even talking about?"

With my arm not being enough to block it all, I rolled my body to the wall, and closed my eyes again.
Now I can finally take a rest.

… No, if you think about it calmly, I've been doing just that for quite a while…

"No, it's nothing…"

"Nonono, as if it could be nothing! Ku why is it that Leigie-niisama's always like this!"

The room temperature rises all at once.
It's just a bit hot. To get as much shade as possible, I pressed my body to the wall.
Kanon annoyingly lowered her staff onto the ground, letting out quite a nostalgic sound.

"… And what business do you have… Kanon of Ruin?"

The first response that came to my question was the sound of the floor breaking.
Just what is getting this girl so angry…

"What business… you say? Leigie, you… do you even understand what it is you've done?"

"Nope."

I'm Sloth. There's no way I would do anything.

"Ku… ah, fine. Fine. Leigie. That's just the sort of man you are. Let me give you a special explanation of just what it is you've perpetuated."

“No, I’m not particularly interested.”

“Just shut up and listen!”

Countless fist-sized balls of fire impact my body. I don’t take any damage.
For some reason, I’ve been attacked by Demons of Wrath quite frequently, so of the many resistances I have, my resistance to flame is the greatest.

“Listen, Leigie-niisama. You… You completely froze over the entire territory you had been granted! … In perpetual ice that would never melt by natural means.”

“… I see.”

My sadness, my despair is higher than mountains, wider than the sky, and deeper than the oceans.
That’s all it means.
Well, for the time being, I’ll apologize.

“It wasn’t on purpose, please forgive me.”

“… Forgive!? How many years did you think it takes to thaw frozen soil?”

“…”

There’s no way I would know something like that.
Thinking about it was pointless, so I gave up, and rolled around. I have no pillow to hold, so my arms are feeling exceedingly lonely.
Kanon’s staff pierced the cuff of my clothing. I kept rolling back and forth regardless, so the edge of my shirt was ripped.

I blankly looked up at the Great Demon King.
Flaming crimson hair, and deep red eyes like pigeon’s blood. The King of Destruction.

Seriously, just what did she come here for?

“Kanon.”

“… Be quiet. Talking to you drains my energy.”

“… Were you my sister?”

“!? … Ah!”

Kanon’s face is dyed bright red. I feel Wrath from her.

I shouldn’t have any siblings. Now and in the past.
… No, could it be I’ve just forgotten them? Come to think of it, perhaps they existed.

“L-Leigie… what you’re thinking right now is probably wrong.”

“… I see.”

Then why am I a niisama?
I closed my eyes, and started to think, but it became a pain, so I gave up. That doesn’t really matter.

Call me whatever you like.

"Ahem."

Kanon awkwardly clears her throat, and bends her hips to match my eyelevel.

"Leigie, I came to clean up after you. No, in the first place, I came because of a report that Heard was going to dispose of your army's generals, but… finding the entire territory covered in ice was unexpected…"

It's more unexpected to me that you personally came for such a trivial reason.
Is the Great Demon King really just bored? Please share your good fortune with me.

"Why did you seal your territory, the Castle of Shadows, your people in ice? Why did Leigie-niisama, who left everything to Heard Lauder, and never actively moved perpetuate something like this at this point in time?"

"…"

Anything and everything doesn't matter. Talking is a pain.
But if you force me to say it, what sealed them may have been me, but it wasn't me.
The only ones I actively froze were Lize, and that gold-head, and that single man who's served me since times long past.

The rest of them… simply received the side-effects of Melancholia.
They were merely frozen by that. They couldn't withstand the very fact that I existed there.
I don't care about the surroundings, but how sad of a truth it must be.

"Leigie-niisama, I've heard that Father was in your care in the past. Father's father as well, and even the father before that were in your care. I myself, when I was a child, I'm aware that you often looked after me. So if possible, I don't want to have to dispose of you."

"Thank you?"

"Your welc… w-wrong. I wasn't looking for your thanks! The army is yours, niisama, and it's not like I came to ask you what you would do after losing your generals or anything. The freezing, and the skill you used that I have no recollection of, right now, that doesn't really matter. All I want to ask is but one, a single simple question…"

Kanon has a serious expression as she looks into my eyes. As if the answer was lying somewhere deep inside of them.
But that's probably a mistake. I'm sure my eyes are as empty as ever. Looking for it is a waste of time.

"Niisama… do you plan on rebelling against me, against Kanon?"

Those words triggered a vivid flashback from the depths of my memory.

Kanon of Ruin.
One who was able to injure me, a rare Demon Lord of Wrath specializing in attack power.
Regardless of enemy or ally, all that came into contact with her Wrath were reduced to ash; the King of Destruction.

And that was something from quite a while ago. Her current power should be greater than it was back then.
Perhaps even great enough to pierce through my Sloth.

What… a pain.
I'm in despair.

"Wha… niisama!?"

Kanon hurriedly lifts her face.
On her beautiful Glossy hair, and her ruby-like eyes, and everything else, a thin layer of frost descended.

"Could it be… you really plan on opposing me!?"

Flames dance, and cover her figure. Through the flickering crimson flames, I see an expression of shock.
The frost instantly melts and disappears. Flames to melt the ice. Meaning this was what melted the ice on this land, is it?
Kanon's eyebrows lift for a moment, before going back down. She spoke, as if to reassure herself.

"No… that's wrong. There's no way a Lord of Sloth would ever do something so troublesome… right, of all things, niisama wouldn't do anything that required so much activity."

That train of thought is strange. Why does everyone keep saying its so strange for Sloth to move.
That's wrong. The reason I don't move is, considering the merits of moving, and the merits of not, the latter offers a higher strategic advantage.
And so, if an enemy comes, I'll fight, and it ends up that moving will get rid of troublesome things easier, I will move. In Tokyo, I would die if I didn't work, so I worked. To summarize, everything… depends on the situation.

It seems that among Sloth Demons, there are many who will quietly let themselves get destroyed.
Could it be that they're idiots? Resist, man. Are you guys supposed to be shellfish or something?
No, even a shellfish would offer some resistance.

In particular, Melancholia offers some offensive power to the defensive Acedia. As if to offer that melancholy, that dark depression onto others. It covers Sloth's weak points quite nicely.

I reach out my hand, and touch Kanon's.
On that gesture, Kanon's movements stopped.

… Just like this.

"Freezing Grave."

"Eh…?"

Kanon raises a stupid sound, before being sealed in a coffin of ice in the same position she was in.

Her expression was somewhat innocent, and it's hard to think of her as the Great Demon Lord, the recipient of everyone's awe.
Even if you call her the Great Demon King, she's only at this level.

And of that, I felt sorrow. I let out a sigh.
Just what is to become of this world.

"Hah… how depressing…"

"Wai… W-what the hell are you doing! K-kanon-sama!?"

Lize, who had just come through the door, frantically runs over to the sealed Kanon.
She touched the transparent high-quality ice that enclosed the suspended Great Demon King. Her cramped face looked down on me.

"Leigie… of Sloth. Like hell… this is a fraud. Even the one who dominates destruction and flames, Kanon-sama was… even if it was a surprise attack, in a single blow!? Lord of Sloth, why is it that you continue to resign yourself to Rank Three!!?"

"…"

How troublesome.
I don't want status. I don't plan on becoming some Great Demon King, and I don't need the world. If I can continue living without it, then I don't even need power.

… I merely ask for a rest deeper than all.

My mood lowers. Nothing matters at all.

It was Sloth along with Melancholy. Nihility is truth, and depression.
That is the longings that I govern.

Depravity and resignation, escape and decay, suspension and stagnation, inertia and dejection.

The Melancholy Soul Core that had grown within me some day or another covers my body in a chilling, cold power.
Something like this has never happened before. Is it because my Sloth has grown dim, or that they're out of balance? Well, that is yet another thing that doesn't matter.
What's done is done. The power that had flowed out once, as if the dam had been broken, sinks everything into a hell of depression.
Answering to my feelings, ice spreads out, and the fortress Kanon thawed was iced over once more. The moisture solidifies, and the air turns cold.
The Flames of Wrath Lize had hurriedly let out wrap around my body, but without being able to break through my Sloth's resistance, they disappear without giving me a single wound.

In this annoying world, at least a little peace and quiet.
I manifest a fist-sized ball of white light on the palm of my hand.
It's a Skill I'm using for the first time, but I can understand. The power coming from it is incomparable to before. Melancholy Skills can't even save the User from being part of their target.
I guess even I'll be locked in Ice that will never melt. But I won't die from it. Perhaps that's fine, in and of itself.

Oh world, fall into depraved suspension.
The ball of light lets off a silvery flash as it's deployed.

Now sleep if you will.

『Absolute Requiem』

"Wait… nu…"

Lize, who tried to deploy flames, was sucked in by the power, and frozen in the same posture.
The silver arrows pouring out from the rising ball of light spread over the world like shooting stars. Its scope far surpasses the extent of my Zone.
Wherever the arrow sticks into, the cold air deployed around it automatically takes control of the area without a sound, and changes it into a white world.
It didn't take long for all moving things to have disappeared from the world.
It's not like I can perceive the outside of my Zone, though, but its influence should extend beyond it.

The only thing I didn't expect was…

"… So my Sloth's resistance is the stronger of the two…"

… In a world where all creation was put to sleep equally, I was the only one who didn't experience the effects.
Well, so be it.

If that's the case, then I'll just sleep normally.
Alone, in solitude, I'll sleep quietly.

When I was about to close my eyes, I noticed.
It seems the world won't let me sleep so easily.

"… I. Get. It… I got it, I understand, niisama. Your goal is…"

"…"

The ice that Kanon was locked in had silently melted. The Great Demon King's slim figure was wrapped in a thin layer of high heat. It's a heat that even exceeds my Melancholy.
But in her eyes, there's no anger. Kanon's Wrath is only ever pointed at enemies.
Does she not see me as an enemy yet? Well, that's true. I have no enemies.

… No allies either.

To escape from reality, I turn my face away.
But what a pain.

She broke it. The ice seal.
So she can break it by herself. My power.
As I thought, Wrath is the power to deal with Sloth and Melancholy. I myself have no enemies, but Wrath can be called the natural enemy of the Sins that I govern, I guess.

"Niisama… you just want to sleep, right?"

Those were eyes filled with pity. A transparent voice.
Nothing really matters.
And her niisama, niisama is getting annoying. She has no intentions of healing that habit, does she.

"… Niisama…?"

"T-that doesn't matter right now, does it!? Ah, dammit. Why is it that after all this, I don't feel any hostility or killing intent from him!? Niisama always has to… dull my Ira."

"… I see."

If it really feels that way to you, then it's simply because I have no hostility or killing intent.
Up until now, I have never killed another of my own distinct will. Probably, it should be like that.
I mean, in order to spend days in Sloth, I don't need to kill others.

Having completely recovered, Kanon stabbed her staff into the ground. Her body has no injuries.

And after hesitating for a moment, she made an announcement with a clear voice.

Her tone held a strong will in it. Just like the Flames of Wrath she governed, with bright energy, power on the level that I could understand why she was the Great Demon King.
And miraculously, it was what Serge possessed, long ago.

"… Leigie of the Slaughterdolls… As the Great Demon King, I hereby declare. You are a failure as a Demon Lord. Even if you may be a Demon, doing something as outrageous as freezing over your own land, and covering it in ice and snow is something difficult to forgive."

"… I see."

"As punishment… niisama's rank will be demoted to the very lowest."

"… I see."

"Your land will also be confiscated. All you'll keep is this Castle of Shadows."

"… I see."

From the start, that was all unnecessary to me. I don't have any particular feelings for it.
Ranking and place, go give it to someone worthy who actually wants it.

Without a sound, golden flames flow out of her staff. It isn't hot. But the Fortress's ice melts, and it touches all the earth as it expands. It's a volume of power worthy of the Great Demon King. I feel power equal to or exceeding the Demon Lord I fought not too long ago.
In a voice tinged with fatigue, but without letting it spread to her expression, Kanon continued on.

"The seized land will go to the new Demon Lord, Heard Lauder… The Prideful Kaiser… I thought it wouldn't be strange if he became a Demon Lord at any moment, but it sure took a while. That's just how strong he built up his『Superbia』, I guess…"

"… Yeah…"

Exactly. That's exactly how it should be. Not that I really know.
He's a Demon that could keep up with me over the years. There's no doubt his way of life is a cut above other Demons.

"So just sleep in silence, Lord of Sloth."

"Yeah."

I'll do just that.
And there, I quietly closed my eyes. Within my sinking conscious, it felt like I heard the Great Demon King's Voice…

… Something good will definitely happen tomorrow.

Part 4: Iyo

And once more, my daily life continued.

"Leigie-sama, it's time for your meal."

"Yeah…"

I eat the food Lorna made, and let her clean the room.
Once the room has been cleaned, she makes the bed, and in that time, I leisurely doze off in the armchair.
My soul is at peace, and I barely have any stress.

Without a need to work, even the enemies that had invaded at regular intervals stopped coming. It sure is nice.

"Eh? Hya…? L-Leigie-sama… this is…"

But today, Lorna raises a rare scream.
She had cleared away the covers, and her facial expression had become stiff. Her body had solidified in that position.
No, this isn't my Melancholy at work.

On the bed was a small girl. Stark naked at that.
Embracing my pillow, she slept with a peaceful expression.
I don't know her name.

"W-why is Medea… inside Leigie-sama's bed…"

"… No idea."

No, I have a vague recollection of her coming in, but I didn't have any interest, so I let her be.

It's not like she was going to harm me, or do anything, and the bed is more than large enough. I had no reason to refuse. No wait, it was just a pain.
I don't know the reason, but just go wherever you want.

"Medea? Medea!? Wai… Wake up!!"

"Nyaa…"

Being shaken left and right, the female Demon named Medea painstakingly opened her eyes.
Her eyes were quite clouded and stagnant. She rubbed them in a sleepy gesture.

"…W … what?"

"D… don't what me! W-w-why are you in Leigie-sama's room…"

"I'm a pillow. That's all. Sleepy. Good night."

"Hah? Wai… wake up~!"

The form of her embracing the pillow again as she tried to sleep no longer held a fragment of her pride as a Demon.
Lorna tries shaking her again, but this time she shows no signs of getting up. And from her body, I feel a deep and quiet presence.
It's one that I know all too well.

It's nothing other than the power of『Acedia』.

And as long as that's true, I doubt Medea will be waking any time soon.
Sloth gives bonuses to sleep. No, it isn't a Resistance, just…

"Lorna, leave her be."

"Eh? A-are you serious?"

"… Yeah."

I can understand the feeling of Sloth Demons all too well.
Waking her up forcefully won't work. And it's not like she's causing any trouble.

After shifting her gaze between me and Medea for a while, Lorna eventually let out a deep sigh.
It was quite a rare expression from her.

"Understood. Leigie-sama… but as I thought, for a man and woman not in a relationship to sleep in the same bed, I cannot recommend it…"

"I see."

This Demon sure says some ethical things.
Well, I don't have any particular objections to those words. I'm not approving either, but to me, it was actually something that didn't really matter all too much.

"I will be carrying Medea to another room's bed. Is that alright?"

"… Yeah."

It was a bloodcurdling expression I couldn't say came from the living.
She's not letting out any anger by any means, but her rare words backed by a strong will made me nod immediately.
As if she were carrying a large package, She hoisted up the unmoving Medea, and bowed before departing from the room.

It must be hard, being a maid.

As I faintly considered such things, I shrunk my body inside the chair.
It's a new chair Kanon sent over. The previous one suffered too much ice-related damages, and became unusable, but this one isn't bad in itself.

At that moment, the door opened, and yet another Demon stepped in. It was an everyday occurrence.
A Demon that governed Wrath, and one that seems to be observing me: Lize Bloodcross.
I don't get what's so fun about observing me, but if you're just going to quietly watch, then observe all you want.

"Leigie-sama, so you were awake…"

"Yeah."

She usually moved around with a suprising amount of vigor, but now, on her face, there were some rare signs of fatigue.
And as if her body was collapsing, she lowered her body into the chair by the table. Without saying anything, she slumped down.

"… You look tired."

"… Yes. Observing both you and Heard Lauder simultaneously is going to make my bones break some day…"

I see. It seems she's been charged with two subjects this time.
My deepest condolences.

"… Can I complain?"

Do whatever you want. I doubt there's any meaning in complaining to me, but I'll at least quiet down and listen to your words.
It's not like I'll take it to heart, and rather than listening, it'll just be entering my ears, though.

"That Heard Lauder is a monster. Perhaps more so that Leigie-sama… on top of that, he moves around way too much. Even though he's barely become a Demon Lord, He's managed to annihilate all Demon Lords who set even a foot in his territory without fail… Even if they may have just wanted to rile him a little, he personally marches to the enemy headquarters, and perfectly destroys them."

"…"

"On top of that, he seems to be intent on finding a chance to aim for Kanon-sama's neck… He never gives me a single moment's rest. Do you know just how many inspectors have been dispatched to his place? Ten. Ten people! Even if Pride is the most dangerous by nature… this is too much. It's as if I can just see the anxiety on

Kanon-sama's face…"

"…"

"And he's really loud, protesting to get her to raise Leigie-sama's rank."

"…"

"I mean, in an instant, he overruled all the Demons above him, and he's already Rank One."

"…"

"For the unmoving Leigie-sama, there was barely anything I had to do in the means of inspection, but having this much to do is troubling…"

"…"

I see. You've got it rough.
Then you don't really have to come observe over here, you know.
I mean, I don't have any enemies, and I don't do anything but sleep. I don't even move.
Even though I didn't say it, as if she felt my will, she directed a tired, and stiff smile at me.
The power I sense from her body is incomparable to the Lize of my oldest memory of her. It's truly increasing.

"… No, I'm just here for a little rest, so…"

"… I see."

Then do whatever you want.
If you're not going to get in the way of my sleep, then I mind not whatever you do.
No, if there's something you have that can get in my way, then just try it.

"… I'll ask just in case, but have there been any problems on your side?"

"… None."

"I see… that sounds about right."

Her face changes in relief.
that's a lie. Just a single one, it's not really a problem, but a bit of a change. A single thing has happened to the stagnant me.
I only noticed it quite recently. I don't know exactly when it happened, but it was probably after I was deprived of my territory, and I returned to my quiet life.

The truth is, I'm not a Demon Lord anymore.

Class:『Evil God』

My Demon Lord Class changed, and that's my new one.
I never thought that was what came after Lord, and Evil God isn't even a governmental position anymore.

Well, even if my class changes, what I'll be doing stays the same.

I just live by existing as I am. Up 'til now, and probably from here on as well.

Until the day someone annihilates me.

To change the topic, Lize spoke.

"… Come to think of it, recently there's been a strong one among the Assassins Heaven's been sending to provoke the Demon World."

"…?"

And so?
As if she sensed a change in my thoughts, Lize shook her head.
I don't even have to let out words anymore. The perception ability to be able to pick up everything. Lize is quite a hard-to-get existence for me.

"No, well… it seems they have the frightening power to even be able to annihilate those of Demon Lord Class… additionally, they can use their wings to soar through the sky. Their mobility is high, so perhaps even that Heard would let them slip by. Right now, Kanon-sama is preparing countermeasures, but I thought I would at least spread what's become common knowledge…"

"An angel strong enough to kill Demon Lords…"

That definitely is a frightening existence.
In the first place, an Angel's powers are the natural enemy of Demons. The magic wafting around the Demon World is said to give high enhancements to a Demon's abilities, but even so, there are angels strong enough to kill Demons repeatedly. It's a pain. That's also the reason why, while Heaven occasionally invades the Demon World, Demons rarely go up and attack Heaven.
On my words, Lize slumped her body over the table, and turned her head to look at me.

"No, it's not an Angel… Well, they're still classified as angels, but… do you know about『Valkyries』?"

Nope. Never heard of it.
Well, I may have heard the word once or twice in my previous live, but… It was a terminology from the fantasy genre, I think.
On my attitude, Lize let out a sigh.

"『Valkyries』 are a form of Angel, and a special type of unit that comes when the『Einherjar』 called to Heaven experience an aberration. Compared to Demons and normal Angels that store up power over many years, they're born with a vast amount of battle experience, so they can be quite troublesome… well, there shouldn't be that many fallen warriors that can knock down a Demon Lord, though…"

Hmm, so there are things like that.
Good for them.

Seeing I had absolutely no motivation, Lize shrugged her shoulders.

"The Blade of the Silver Blue, Serge Serenade. She's confirmed to be the strongest『Valkyrie』 up to date. I think it would be best if you at least store the name in your memory banks."

"… Yeah."

An unexpected name. I try to lift my body for a second, but it won't move, so I give up.
But the sight of battles long past revive in my head all at once.

I can't believe it. Why is she still alive?
Dammit. So unlike Japan, the Dead can come back to haunt you in this world.
Even death is reversible. No, this time might be a bit different from reversal, but whatever the case, what a Fantasy.

I looked at my own class once more.

『Evil God』

It's probably the highest class a Demon can attain.

"? You seem happy."

"… No."

But so be it.
I'll wait here for you no matter how long it takes. That's my field of expertise, and probably, as a single Demon Lord, as the Last Boss, my obligation.

Can you match up to the Evil God?
Show me your gallant figure.

Iyo.

Satisfied, I close my eyes. I dozed off soon enough.

I am the Lord of Depravity.
Who lives just by being there, a Needless King.
And I bring Depravity unto others, an incarnation of evil who will sink all of God's creation into an abyss of despair

By the time I realized it, I had reincarnated into another world.
I kept sleeping, and at some point I became a Demon Lord.
Even though I never wished for it.
But for me to not have to work, this world is the best. It must be true that good things happen to good people.
The flavor of Sloth is as sweet as honey. Glory, diligence, virtue, or honor. I have no interest in anything like that.

What's there to hide? The Lazy king is… none other than me.

End of Part 1